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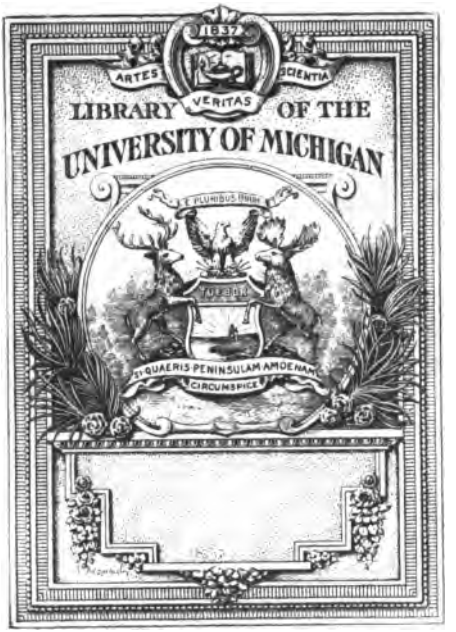
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THE HOLY LAND. By W. H. DIXON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE HOLY LAND.

BY

WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1865.

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PREFACE.

THESE studies of the Scenery and Politics of the Sacred Story were made in the Holy Land—in the tent, the saddle, and the wayside khan—and were sent home from Palestine, not as chapters of a book, but as Notes for a few fireside friends. In offering them to the public, I renounce the dream of instructing scholars in their craft; avoid dogma as beyond the province of a lay writer; and leave controversy for the most part to critics. My aim is to afford the untravelled reader a little help in figuring to himself the country and the events which occupy so many of his thoughts.

In reading my camp Bible (with the help of Philo and Josephus), on the spots which it describes so well, I was surprised to find how much good history lies overlooked in that vast treasury of truth. My book is a picture of what I then saw and read. Hardy speculators will decry some of my views as conservative; but I leave my results

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with the reader, under a sure conviction that unless they are found to be true in the main they will very soon perish out of men's thoughts.

Lady-day, 1865.

A few errors of the press have been corrected in this edition, but no considerable change has been made in the text.

St. James's Terrace, Regent's Park,
Sept. 10, 1865.

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THE HOLY LAND.

CHAPTER I.

Off Jaffa.

PLASH goes the anchor!

"Port?" cries a voice from the berth under mine in the smart ship Il Vapore, an Austrian boat, with a Ragusan captain, a Smyrniote crew, and an Italian name. In less than a pulse of time, a head is butting against the pane of glass which serves to let in light and keep out drench.

Yes: port. The light of dawn is opening on a long dark line of hills, standing back about eighteen miles from the shore; the stars are filming out of sight; the sky is paling to a thin blue; and a grey sea goes lapping and parting round the keel with a sullen sough, except in our front, towards the land, where it appears to rise and cream over a rugged wall of rocks. High above the rugged rocks and whitening surge stands a cone of houses—a town, having a low-lying beach, dark walls, and on either side of these walls a clump of wood.

It is the Holy Land on which we gaze:—the country of Jacob and David, of Rachel and Ruth; the scene of our sweetest fancies, of our childish

prayers, and of our household psalms. Among yon hills the prophets of Israel taught and the Saviour of all men lived and died; that stony hillock of a town is the Joppa to which Hiram sent the cedar wood; this roadstead is the port from which Jonah sailed on his tempestuous voyage; down by the shore to the south hides the flat roof on which it is said that Peter slept. The stretch of sand, with its dunes and crests blown over from the Nile, tricked here and there by a palm, a fig-tree, a pomegranate, is the fore-part of that plain of Sharon on which all the roses of imagination bloom and shed their scent. Yon towering chain of earth—dark, swelling, ridge-like—flushing into pink and amber, growing out into your grasp as you stand peering towards it, is that mountain home of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, which boasts of having Hebron, Zion, Bethel, and Gerizim for its most eminent and most holy peaks.

Priests, soldiers, laymen, pilgrims are astir in the saloon; in the dim nooks of which a Turkish effendi is kneeling at his prayers, a Moldavian papa is making love to a fair sinner, a French author appears to be copying facts from a guide-book into his own, and a Saxon seems bent on filching a pint of fresh water for his difficult morning bath. Young men who have no time to wash—having to land in less than five hours—are twisting cigarettes for the day. Young women are wisping up those hoops of steel which are soon to become a burden in the saddle, if not a danger in the fierce Syrian sun. Nearly all our guests of the cabin are roaring for their boots, their coats, their coffee, their pipes; but

they are roaring to no end, for the steward of Il Vapore is—asleep.

Our steward is a genuine Oriental in a place of trust. Oil is not softer, air not more buoyant, than his spirits. No noise disturbs him, no sarcasm stings him, no shout, no threat ever ruffles the calm good-nature of his smiling face. For one who smokes in bed and breaks his fast on pickles, he has a roundness in his cheek, a music in his laugh, which tell you he belongs to that happy band of men whose dreams agree with them. Ring and rave as you list, this easy man, snug in his sheets, will not only forgive the noise you make, but take no eager and unkindly notice of your passion of tongue and feet. Why should he? Does he not send you a cup of tea at seven; serve up a meal of sardines, pickles, and uncooked swine at eight; indulge you with a refresher of rusk and cheese, and a dash of cognac in your drink about the hour of noon; provide a table of twelve good dishes and one poor wine (some old Pomard in the bin—as an extra fare) at four; make tea for you at eight; produce a kettle, a lemon, and a familiar spirit about nine; amuse you with chess and books, and put out your lamp at ten? What more would you have? Such is your bill of the feast. Nothing can be added, nothing can be changed, unless (a word in your ear, Eccellenza) you would like to arrange with him for some acts of friendship by a private tip. A steward who does his duty from seven in the morning until ten at night should not be disturbed in his dreams, except by the chink of zwanzigers and francs.

You pay ten pounds at an office:—for which sum of money you are lodged and fed while being carried in the steamer from port to port. It is cheap; being less than the cost of bed and board on land; but when you have paid ten pounds to Il Vapore's owners, their steward is still your lord. Pay ten francs more in the shape of vails, and he becomes your slave. Is it not worth the price? For tenpence a day, dropt deftly into the proper palm, you may buy this ship and all its uses. One small coin makes you lord of everything on board; of the pantry, the kitchen, and the cellar; of the cherry sticks, the jebilé, and the easy chairs; of the books, the piano, the chess-board, and the ship charts; of the telescope, the soda-water, and the freshly-frozen snow. Pay down that fee, and you shall dine in the highest seat, go ashore in the captain's gig, enjoy the first peep at journals, sleep in the best berth, and when the company is scant have a cabin to yourself.

The sun, coming up over the ridge of Ephraim, is gilding and purpling the mountain range from Ramah to Carmel. Solomon must have seen this chain of heights in some such morning glow, when, in his Arab delight in colour, he exclaimed to his darling Shulamite:

> Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,
> And the hair of thine head like purple.

Moving through the crowd of Arab sheikhs, Frank pilgrims, Nilotic slaves, Greek traders, and Armenian priests—this motley of all creeds and nations, which adorns and cumbers the quarter-deck—two figures

seem to stand from the rank as types of East and West. The first is a fat young fellow, dressed in a white turban, a yellow cloak, and a scarlet band; the second is an aged lady, in a black gown without hoop, and a dark straw hat.

Hassan (if his name be Hassan), a Cairene trader, suddenly puffed out with cotton, finding himself rich in paras and high in flesh, has been to Galata, where rosy cheeks and brilliant eyes may still be bought by true believers from the Italian merchants; and in that suburb of the splendid city, he has purchased comfort for his age in the shape of four plump wives. The rewards of virtue and a good crop are penned amidships, in a cabin of four berths, under lock and key, while Hassan reclines on his bit of red carpet at their prison door. Night and day he there holds watch and ward. To be sure that none of the crew shall see his hareem, he waits on them himself; like a slave he fetches them bread and fruit, prepares and lights their pipes; fills and removes the water jars; and, after his long and earnest evening prayer, lies down on his mat across the opening of their berths. It is pleasant to watch the white turban bobbing in among its beauties, and on the sound of a Frank footfall, to see its pursy little owner slamming the door and twisting the hasp on his gazelles.

This happy man has paid for a berth of his own, opening on that state-room in which lemons and hot-water are produced about the time of rest; but the lightness of his charge sits heavy on his soul; and when night comes down upon him, and sleep ought to close his lids, he has to mount guard over his fair

mischief; distrusting that holy verse of the Koran which tells him that when the sun has gone down into the sea

All is peace until the breaking of the morn.

In spite of much flesh, and of the good spirits which should attend on flesh, he seems haunted by the dread lest four such darlings, all young, all fat, all new to the world and its ways, must fall into peril, even behind bolts and bars. Happy little wretch! He has spent many piastres on the desire of his heart; on that which is the desire of every Oriental heart; yet he dares not sleep. Munching apples all day, smoking jebilé all night, he frets and pines, his shadow falls less and less; and it is an open question with the crew how long he may live to enjoy the consolations he has bought. At present his share of the world seems hard to bear.

With Marie, the aged lady, a missionary, and the wife of a missionary, there is not a man on board who is not in love. When age is lovely, it is supreme in loveliness. This dame, a Swiss and not mercenary, a Genevese and yet comely, has spent thirty of her best years among Dyaks and Malays; humbly and hopefully striving, in a far-off corner of the globe, to win over a few dark souls to God. After thirty years of toil, she asked for a little rest; came home to her own bright lake; and having kissed old friends, and wept over many graves, she is carrying her white hair and her brave spirit back to that sultry field of labour; knowing that she will see her home among the vines, her alps and streams,

the companions of her youth, the graves of her people, no more—no, never more. The rest of her life is given up to God. On her way back to the Indian ocean, she is going up the Wady Aly to Bethlehem and Jerusalem, that her last thoughts of a hemisphere she is quitting for ever may be connected with her Saviour's cradle and her Saviour's tomb.

May peace go with her in this sacred toil! I am able to give her an olive twig and a few wild flowers from the valley of Nazareth. She says they will be a sign and a comfort to her under a southern sun, and perhaps may be laid upon her shroud when she has done her duty and gained her rest.

The town has now crept into light. Two or three flags are drooping in the air, and a mob of boats comes paddling through a slit in those rocks over which the surf keeps creaming high and white. Strong Arab rowers pull deep and hard; tall fellows, with bare black arms, small heads, and lustrous eyes; clothed in a loose sack or shirt, perhaps bound at the waist by a belt, perhaps not; an easy, inexpensive costume, apt to many uses, though inclined to misbehave itself, in English eyes, as a mere article of dress.

Skimming along the brine like birds, huddling upon each other, the light Arab canoes dance and dip round the companion ladder, while the dark men who handle them grin and chatter and display their teeth. They have plenty of leisure to joke and beg, for the day is still young, though the heat is stifling,

and the people of Jaffa are in no great hurry with their morning meal. You spend two or three hours in buying oranges from one boat, throwing jebilé into a second, salaam-ing to a sheikh in a third. Then a barge slips alongside; and a smart young man in a Syrian accent and a London coat bids us welcome to his house and to the East. A brief exchange of civilities and cigarettes, and we step into his barge; squat down under the red cross, kiss hands to our fair friends on board, and feel the waves slip away from beneath our keel.

As we near that wall of rock, one of the dirtiest bits of reef in the world, the crests of foam break high above its top and cover it from our sight. Hot and blinding glares the sun; the slit is about twelve yards wide; and to miss it as we roll through the breakers in our tiny shell would be instant death. Our Arabs draw with an easy confident stroke, in part the effect of skill, in part of fate. What cares Abdallah for yon reef of rock? Is it sharper than the bridge of Sirat, over which he must one day march? And what if he should fail to strike the gap?

> For the pious there is a place of bliss;
> Gardens and vineyards girt with walls,
> And damsels with high bosoms, ever young;
> And a full cup.

Why, then, should a believer quake? Are yon groves of myrtle more delicious than the gardens of Paradise? Can his homely hareem vie with the celestial houris? For him, to die is to live—and, praise be to Allah, he knows no fear.

CHAPTER II.

Mohammedan Jaffa.

JAFFA can boast a wall, a port, a bazaar, a convent of each rite, a soap-mill, a couple of gates, ten guns, three mosques, six consuls, two Jewish converts, a pasha, an orange-grove—all of which sounds soft and homely to a reader of the Bible and the Arabian Nights: the two books from which nearly all of us learn the little that we know in our youth of the Morning Land. Yet Mohammedan Jaffa is a town in the last degree new and strange to a Frank.

Jaffa is the genuine East; a town in which all that is dark and bright in the Syrian genius seem to have met.

It is not only that here, in Jaffa, the churches are mosques, the pumps are fountains, the streets are tunnels, the men are brown and the women veiled; for all these forms and signs which belong to a comparatively rainless zone may be found from Cairo on the Nile to Beyrout on the sea. Jaffa is a city of ancient type. Though the oldest houses are not more ancient than those of Soho Square, yet, unlike cities which have been made the toys of kings, it has undergone no change since the remotest times. Destroyed in war, rebuilt in peace, it has remained the same in aspect and in site—in the

days of Solomon and Pompey, of Saladin and Napoleon, of Mohammed Ali and Abdul Aziz—a town on a hill, on a cape jutting out into the waves; built up like a cone, house rising upon house to a central peak; having a bad roadstead in its front, and a magnificent orange-grove in its rear. Though Jaffa is the chief town of a rich district, it has no streets, no sewers, no markets, no shops. Though it has always been the sea-gate of Jerusalem, it has no docks, no quays, no jetties, no landing-stairs, no lights. No road leads into it, not even by the open ways of the sea. A steamer may now and then stand off the town a mile or more from the rocks; but she will only come thus near when the winds are low and the waters calm. A puff of storm from the west or south warns the sailor away from this perilous coast, and for week after week of bad weather the place is cut off from communication with the world. The open sea is not open to Jaffa. On the land side, fields creep close to the walls, and sand drifts in at the gates. Beyond the line of wall spreads the great plain; a film of creamy-pink sand lying on a bed of black loam, here and there dotted by Bedaween tents and by ruined towns once bright in song and story, though they have passed away, leaving little behind them on the plain except mounds and graves.

Leaning on the roof-screen of a house, having the hills in front, the sea behind, you may range over the fields of Lydda, a town in which St. Peter healed Eneas, in which St. George was born, and about which Lion-Heart pitched his tents. To the

south stands Ramleh in the sands, with its great cistern, its famous convent, and its beautiful tower of the White Mosque. Beyond Ramleh, at the mountain base, and out of ken, stands the hill of Modin, the princely seat of Simon Maccabeus. Still more to the south, among the drifts and dunes, spring the minarets of Gaza and Ashdod, and near these living cities crouch the ruins of that Askalon in which Herod the Great was born. In the rear of these places, through the region in which Samson caught the foxes and David fought with the giant, corn lands and pastures roll with a waving undulation to the mountain chain.

Falling back on the space round Jaffa, you perceive that not a house clings fondly to the rampart, not a flight of steps weds the country with the town. Through a single gateway, which is barred at night, the great tides of landward life and commerce have to ebb and flow. A ditch, a market, a few wells and graves, lie beyond this portal; making an Oriental suburb; in the daytime busy with crowds and gay with colours; but from sundown to sunrise a place of ghosts, untenanted save by ravening vultures and more savage dogs. In a white field, fenced round by brambles and prickly pears, lie the ashes of a hundred generations of men—Philistines, Hebrews, Macedonians, Saracens, Franks, and Turks.

As a city, Mohammedan Jafia is hot, sad, silent and forlorn. The crow of a child, the snarl of a cur, the coo of a bird, the song of a muezzin calling on the faithful to come and pray, will sometimes

startle and charm your ear; the quick gleam of a lance, the plumage of a bird, the white veil of a lady, may enchant your eye. In the evening, when the fresh dew is on the leaves, and the wind breathes softly through the groves, your nostril may be visited by a rare delight, caught up from myrtles, oranges, and limes. Still, Jaffa as a city, is close and sad: not so the gateway and market-place beyond the wall.

This gate—the Jerusalem Gate—has a weird and magic beauty, borrowed in spirit from the Nile: a lofty arch, a noble tower, well flanked by the city walls, a Saracenic fountain, with jets of water flowing into marble troughs, over which a pious verse from the Koran is printed in golden type. In a nook close by, an old sheikh keeps a cuttab or infant school, in which, for a piastre a week, and a bit of white muslin and a pair of slippers, given to him once a year from the mosque, he teaches the youth of Jaffa to chant their sacred suras hilariously out of tune. In the gateway itself sits the cadi; judging causes in the presence of donkey boys, fellaheen and Franks. This man is fined, that man is flogged; but there is little noise in the court, no bill of exceptions, and no thought of an appeal. The heat makes every one grave; the very soldiers on guard are dawdling over pipes, and the collectors of duty are dozing in the shade.

Some steps beyond the Jerusalem Gate, between the town ditch and the orange gardens, lies the suburb; in which a kind of fair is held the whole year round; busiest when the maize is being garnered

and the fruit is ripe. It is held on the open and sandy plain, among a scatter of booths and sheds, some of them raised on poles and covered in with mats; while others are built of reeds stuck lightly into the soil, laced in and out with twigs, and tiled with boughs and leaves. A house on the left is of planks; one large hut, used for a café and exchange, has a wooden frame; but most of these booths are made of canvas stretched upon a frame of poles. Near the great tank, in which, when you go to drink water, you may happen to find a camel lapping, an Arab bathing, and a girl filling jars for domestic use, stands a house of stone and mud, a sort of pound, in which a sheikh who dares not ride into the town may stable his mare. Under the light roofs of these sheds, a merchant buys and sells; a barber tells stories and shaves Moslem heads; a muleteer munches his black crust; a wayfarer breathes his hookah, paying a para for his jebilé and fire; an Arab haggles over the price of a carbine, a length of cotton, an Indian bamboo; a donkey-boy sucks his bit of sweet cane; a famished negro gobbles up his mess of oil and herbs. All these men of swarthy race; some of them sheikhs from the desert, some of them slaves from Cairo and the Soudan; all bearded and bare-legged; these wearing armlets and earrings, those wearing green shawls or turbans, a sign of their saintly rank; plod ankle-deep in the sand, each grain of which is hot as though it had been swept from a furnace to their feet. Piled up around them are heaps of fruit, such as very few gardens of this earth can match. Grapes,

oranges, tomatoes, Syrian apples, enchant the eye with colour. Figs, peaches, bananas, imprison the sunshine of summer days. Plums dazzle you with bloom. What mounds of dates, what mountains of melons! And through all these crowds of men, through all these lanes of fruit, winds the track of the camel and the ass, the pilgrim and the monk, the pasha and the prior, from whatever point of the compass they may chance to come. And so it has always been, and always must be, in this suburb of the Jerusalem Gate. Dorcas bought fruit in this market, drew water at yon well. St. Peter walked in from Lydda along this sandy path. Pompey, Saladin, Napoleon, rode through this litter of sheds and stalls.

The second gate of Jaffa, the Water Gate, faces the sea. Not so big as the land gate, which admits a camel with a load of maize on his hunch, this gate is no more than a slit or window in the wall; about six feet square; just level with the ground; and about five feet higher than the sea line when the wind is hushed and the water still. A breeze from the west frisks foam into the doorway, blinding the aga on duty, drenching the poor donkeys, preventing the porters from either loading or unloading boats. Through this small cutting in the rampart everything coming into Palestine from the west—from France and England, from Egypt and Turkey, from Italy and Greece—must be hoisted from the canoes; such articles as pashas, bitter beer, cotton cloth, negroes, antiquaries, dervishes, spurious coins and stones, monks, Muscovite bells, French clocks,

English damsels and their hoops, Circassian slaves, converted Jews, and Bashi Bazouks; hauled up from the canoes by strings of Arabs; men using their arms for ropes, their fingers for grappling hooks, their scanty robe—a sack tied round the waist with a strap or sash—for a creel, a table, a kerchief, anything you please, except a covering for their limbs. In like manner, all waste and produce going out of the country for its good or evil: maize, oranges, dragomans, penitent friars, bananas, olives, soldiers on leave, Frank pilgrims, fakeers, consuls, deposed pashas: must be shot from that tiny port-hole into the dancing boats, like Jonah into the sea. When a steamer hails in the road, this baling up, this shooting out, of goods and men, goes on for hours at a stretch, to a manifest increase of the fun; yet the aga and effendi in office, nay, the small boys of the port, seem all unconscious of the sport. One hot and idle day, I had the pleasure of seeing a Seraskier's hareem hoisted out of boats into the town. If yon aga in the white turban and flowing skirt had been blessed with any sense of humour, he would have died of his duty, perhaps years ago.

Two or three summers since, when the prince of Wales was riding through the Holy Land, a Moslem, proud of his country and jealous for his port, threw out a log jetty alongside of which the gig of a man-of-war might lie; but when the Prince turned off from Judah into the hill country of Samaria, instead of dropping down into the plain of Sharon, as he had first proposed, the Syrian patriot chopped his

jetty into firewood, and like a pious Moslem gave the splinters to the poor.

Mohammedan Jaffa runs no risk of being invaded by cabs and horses, not having a single street along which they could roll and race. In Stamboul you may hire an araba; in Cairo you can call a fly; but if you should wish to ride in Jaffa, you must either mount the hump of a camel or bestride the bones of an ass. A mule, a horse even, may be hired at the Jerusalem Gate; but the hacks there found among the booths and sheds belong, not to the town and its people, but to Arab merchants who send out servants and slaves from place to place, just as they may chance to find pilgrims whom they can serve and cheat: being one week in El Arish, another in Beyrout, a third at Damascus or Es Salt. No machine on wheels—no drag, coach, stage, gig, van, or barrow—has ever been known within these Jaffa walls. Everyone goes on foot; the lady in her veil, the priest in his robes, the peasant in his rags. Everything is carried on the back; the camels being drays, the donkeys carts, the fellaheen trucks, in this primitive system of life and trade. Haroun might walk through yon gate into the fair and find nothing changed in the habits of his countrymen since the times when he and his trusty vizier wandered about the streets of his capital by night.

Watch this damsel in the pink robe and the long veil as she trips daintily along to market or bazaar. Is she Aminé? Are Safie and Zobeide in the house—yon house with the high wall, over which the palm tree throws its fronds? Passing

through the arch, and raising a little corner of her veil, she beckons with a tiny dark hand to one of the porters dozing by the wall, the motion of her fingers saying to his eyes, "Pick up thy basket, O young man, and follow me." Gliding from stall to stall, she piles up his basket with bread and veal, with grapes and lemons, with violets and orange flowers, with sprigs of myrtle and eglantine; and then, with the young man at her heels, trips home to the house. Flitting past the fountain, and past the mosque, into a silent lane, the lady taps at a large door and enters into a courtyard. Here she is lost to sight, if not to conjecture. Will Safie open the door to that porter? Will Zobeide dazzle him with her beauty? Will the royal mendicants arrive at night, and Haroun himself drop in to enjoy the cheer and increase the mirth?

More likely is it that this sedate Aminé will prepare the evening meal for one nearer and more precious to her heart; so that when Abdallah, servant of the Lord, comes in from his toil in the city, in the field, in the port, she may set these dainties before him, and then kissing him on the mouth, and shedding on his spirit the light of her round black eyes, laugh when she sees that he eats of them and that his soul is glad? Perhaps so; perhaps, too, she will sing for him that beautiful evening strain from the Koran:

> Have we not given you the earth for a bed,
> And made you husband and wife,
> And given you sleep for rest,
> And made you a mantle of the night?

CHAPTER III.

My Arab Master.

"Good morning, Master!" says Yakoub, gliding softly into my cell, and using up in his first salutation all that he knows of English, with the sole reserve of some six or eight words of uncommon strength and flavour, much used by our sailors in the Levant, and perhaps elsewhere. Yakoub is my new master, whom I bought for myself in Stamboul; paying him two hundred piastres a day for making me do what he pleases, go whither he likes, order the food he prefers, and ride behind him on the second-best mare. When he comes into the room, taking my hand reverently, he bows his head, as much as to say that his health is in my keeping; but the rogue knows his place and power and is laughing in his sleeve at this customary comedy of Arab life. Then, in a jargon which is meant to be English to a Saxon, French to a Gaul, Romaic to a Greek—a jargon that gave me some trouble when he first began to reign over me—he inquires whether we shall really set out to-day, seeing that more bad news is pouring in from Gaza, Nazareth, and Nabulus? Yes, Yakoub; let us mount and move. Have we not spent days in Jaffa, sucking oranges and munching grapes by the sea shore, when we ought to have been climbing the hill of Modin,

peering into the grotto of Bethlehem, and braving the heats of the Dead Sea?

Sullen, incredulous, Yakoub hangs about the room; takes down my strong leathern belt; peeps into the barrel and tries the spring of my revolver; casts a covetous glance at my railway wrap (an innocent square of cotton wool, worked into the pattern of a tiger skin); feels the weight of my hunting whip, which he playfully assures me has just bronze enough to crack a hyena's skull; ascertains by touch the sharpness of my English spurs; measures with his eye the quantity of my quinine, tea, cognac, powder and ball. Being satisfied that his slave possesses nearly everything that an Arab gentleman is likely to require on a journey, he drops into that lingua Franca, which, on a good deal of acquaintance, proves to consist mainly of the Italian of Genoa, dashed with the patois of Marseilles, a spice of seafaring Saxon, and some dirty bits of Greek:

"The mule shall be packed, Master. Ishmael has gone to find Saïd in the market place. All ready by ten."

"What sort of nag shall I have to ride?"

"Very good mare, Master; Sabeah, child of the desert; very swift mare."

Saïd is my mukari; a man who either owns the horses on which you ride, or travels with them for another owner, and who feeds and curries them, and takes a general charge of your baggage on the road. Saïd is a Nubian, a negro, and a slave; and like the mule and horses is the property of an Arab

gentleman, not too proud to let his people and his beasts earn money by trade.

Ishmael is an Arab lad whom I have picked up in the fair. One day, when I was sitting under a screen, smoking a cigarette, an imp some twelve years old, with lustrous eyes, a swarthy skin, a soft Syrian face, ran up to me; a lad of pure Arab blood, sinewy and lithe, such a one, methought, as that youth whom the vizier's daughter loved. What a model he seemed for a painter of Ishmael!

"Want donkey?"

"What, you speak English?" says I, slipping, as I spoke, a piastre into his fist; at which he grinned and nodded, till his opening eyes seemed all in a blaze.

"Ya, ya; me speak English. Me show consul, one more piastre."

"You sordid little Jew!"

"Me Jew!" fired the child. "Me Arab. My fader donkey boy. Me donkey boy. Very good donkey. Go hotel, go consul, go Ramleh, go Jerusalem?"

"Would you go all that way?"

"Me go Cairo, me go Damascus—plenty piastre, plenty piastre."

I felt a weakness for the wretch, endowed him with the name of Hagar's son, and hired him on the spot to be one of my fellow-subjects to Yakoub, whose rule his spirits and his antics may enable me to bear.

On his own showing, Yakoub is by birth an Arab, by profession a Christian; but to which of the

many branches of our Church he has brought the homage of his vices, who can pretend to say? His religion is apparently like his language—a part of many, the whole of none; for one sees that the man is striving, with a small and feline art, to be all things to all tribes and sects: to the Italian a Catholic; to the Russian a Greek; to the Egyptian a Copt. To the English he would be a Protestant, but for the dread lest an attempt to claim spiritual kinship with an Oxonian or a Templar might result in his being thrashed. With a Bostonian, he would not scruple to profess himself an Evangelical convert —a brand plucked from the fire by an American Paul; while, to the Londoner, whom he thinks likely to hate him as a Papist and to despise him as a Greek, he is sly enough to pass muster as a pupil of the more humble Maronite Church.

Apart from his dubious creed, Yakoub (if I may speak of him now as he will appear when we have come to know him worse) has something in him of the thief, the bully, and the sneak, though enjoying these Syrian qualities only in a mean degree and exercising them for objects infinitely small. To wit: he will weave a long web of falsehoods that he may cheat you of a para, and will watch a whole night for the chance of robbing you of a cigarette. In his company, you dare not leave a knife, a cartridge, a comb, a quinine-bottle, a map, a shawl, a cigar-case, a handkerchief loose about your tent. Nothing is too hot for his mouth, too rough for his pouch. Yet, it would be a gross injustice to rank Yakoub with the thieves of countries like England,

Italy, and France: he is a man of the soil, even in his vices, and the rogueries which he loves to practise upon you are the growth of thousands of years. A Turpin on a Syrian road would filch your powder and tobacco, your salt and quinine, your razor and shirt, from the mere lust of possessing them: but Yakoub only pilfers as becomes an Arab lord of the soil, who, while condescending to lead you and feed you through his country, cannot help exercising his fascinations over your waifs and strays. With him, the act of thieving is that of a man taking his own by stratagem wherever he may chance to find it. These odds and ends of property—these bits of leather, these pots of meat and sardines, these knives and spoons, these dustings of the powder-horn, these drainings of the brandy-flask—are his royalties, his flotsam and jetsam, his fines, his liveries, and his courts leet. Like so many of his wild countrymen, though he lives by travel, and prefers a tent to a house, he is a stranger to all those longings and sentiments which drive the Gaul and Saxon over the face of the earth. He thinks that a man who leaves his home for any other cause than that of finding better food and more abundant water, must be mad; and he regards the Frank masters whom he serves and cheats, as a number of restless spirits, cursed and driven forth into the desert to be the spoil and prey of God's chosen sons. Yet, the pleasure of cheating is, in his eye, greater than the gain. When filching from your store, is he not spoiling the Egyptian? In riches and in strength—as a rider, as a shot—he feels that he might meet with but

small success in a contest with the Frank; but in craft and skill he knows himself more than your match; and when he tithes your goods, believing you too dull to detect him in these petty frauds, his heart dilates with a peculiar pride and joy. Who is the superior then? You may daunt him by your daring, awe him by your pride; but can you deprive him of this Syrian consolation of seeing you made the daily victim of his more agile fingers and more crafty brain?

By calling himself a Christian, Yakoub escapes that service of arms which his soul abhors; but to make all things safe, and to win for himself many protectors, he appears to have accepted all the Churches at once, Roman and Coptic, Maronite and Greek. The lord of every creed, the slave of none, this Arab is a perfect pattern of obedience to the law. Often, in the early morning, when the camp was rising, and the sun was not, I have caught him at his devotions, not before an alter of the Virgin, but before the tomb of a Moslem sheikh. If he be an Ansayreh (as I more than suspect), he can hug himself with the thought that he is over-reaching both the devil and the Padishah—saving his soul from Gehenna and his body from Hassan Bey.

A Christian in Syria, whether a true man or a false, while he rides his camel, shakes down his olives, and remains at peace with his sovereign and his neighbour, has no use for the sword. Even when the Maronites invade a Druse village, burn a few vines, lift a few cattle, and get beaten for their pains by fifty young men against three hundred,

they can call on the Turk from Damascus, the Zouave from Algiers, to defend them against the irate and avenging owners of fields which have been laid waste. Nor has a Maronite, in the view of men like Yakoub, any more need to be truthful and honest than he has to be brave. To fight is a Turk's business; to speak the truth is a Frank's business. To treat his word as a bond, a pledge to be kept at all costs, is a mystery of conduct which a Syrian leaves with his wondering contempt to the English and the Turks. More than once, when our tent had been pitched for the night near a well, among peasants and soldiers, Yakoub has replied to a caution about leaving such things on the mat as might tempt these natives to pilfer—"Heugh! they are safe. Turk no take them; his religion not allow him to steal."

"What news of Akeel Aga this morning?"

"Bad news, Master," says Yakoub, who, knowing that the country is much disturbed, would rather hang on at Jaffa, doing nothing and being paid for it, until safer times—"Akeel gone east, Akeel gone south; Akeel is the wind; to-day at Tiberias, to-morrow at Petra, next day at Suez; Turk never catch the wind, and never catch Akeel. Shall we start?"

"At ten o'clock."

CHAPTER IV.

Plain of Sharon.

AT twelve we are in the saddle, ploughing through the sand; three horses and a mule; one good revolver, a second so-so, the property of Yakoub, who begins firing it at dogs and eagles before we are clear of the mills and gardens; all my people mounted, save imp Ishmael, who, happy and alert in the possession of three piastres, runs on foot with the mule, saying, with a wicked grin, that he will run over to Ramleh and prepare our pipes.

We are all in high spirits and in perfect health. Before mounting our mares, we went to look for the place in which Tabitha, the Dorcas, the gazelle, as we should call her the darling, had been laid after her second death. Of course it was in a garden; almost equally of course this garden was the property of an American. How soon a young people learn to beat the old! Not a house in Jaffa is of greater age than the houses in Soho Square. Since the Apostle came over from Lydda, along this path, to raise Tabitha from the dead, Jaffa has been razed by Vespasian and Godfrey, by Saladin and the Egyptian sultans; these shores have been swept by Norseman, Greek and Venetian pirates, and by a rabble of conquerors, from the Persian and Ara-

bian down to the Memlouk and the French. Bertrand de la Broquière, who landed in Palestine for his sins, while the English were roasting his countrywoman, Joan of Arc, for a witch, describes the town as so rent and razed in his time, that a few sheds thatched with leaves, like these in the marketplace now, offered him the only shelter which a pilgrim thrown upon the coast could find. Into one of these reed tents, the Christian knight had to crawl for protection against the attacks of a noon-tide sun. Yet an Arab merchant owns the tanner's house, and a Yankee consul boasts of possessing Tabitha's tomb!

Yakoub leads the way, in his place of pride, through the knots of pedlars, fruit-sellers, mat-weavers, monks, and muleteers, throwing a jest at one, kissing a compliment to a second, crossing himself to a third; his words not always clean, for a Syrian of the lower orders calls a cat by its name with a license of speech that would amaze the roughs of our black country and startle the rowdies of New York. A smile, at most an ejaculation, is the only answer of fellah and Bedaween to his lightsome jest. A Syrian rarely laughs, and he never laughs aloud, though he may pride himself highly on the possession and appreciation of eloquence and wit. When we cross the path of a person of rank and esteem, a consul, a cadi, a sheikh, an ecclesiastic, a bey, Yakoub pulls up his mare, says a few humble syllables under his bated breath, and if welcomed by a smile, for every one knows him, he may venture to approach the dignitary, to touch his hand

and even to kiss it. Friends never give hands to each other in Palestine; for to seize a man's hand is to crave his protection, to proffer yourself his servant; hence the act is one of obedience and devotion, almost of servility. A slave to whom you make a present, a servant to whom you do a kindness, will rush to your hand and press it against his temples or his lips. Equals salute each other; if Moslem, by the soft Syrian phrase of Peace be with you; if Christians, by the sign of the cross. This salutation is made with singular grace, even by the beggar in his rags. An English traveller, making no sign of the cross when he greets a brother, is commonly supposed by the Syrians to be a Turk.

For an hour we plod through the pink and burning sands; gardens on our right and left to Yasor, one of the many Bible Hazors, now a village of three or four huts; lemons, apples, pomegranates in endless glory; now passing a kiosk, with an Arab at his prayers, next a fountain and a group of mounted men, anon the body of a mule picked clean by dogs and kites. Ribs, skulls, thigh-bones of animals, whiten these Syrian tracks, even close to large towns and within city gates; for the land is poor, and it is the custom of this country that nothing, not even a bone, shall be lost. Falling under its load by the wayside, an ass, a camel, must be left behind, like the stalks which slip from the binder's arm. "Why," asks the compassionate Arab, "should food be taken from the famishing tooth? God made the jackal and the vulture, and having made them, meant that they should be fed." Even man himself,

when dying in these desert roads, expects to fare little better than the beast that bears him. Starting on a long ride, an Arab will equip himself with a pipe, a water-skin, a prayer-book, and a winding-sheet, in which his body may be rolled by his servant or companion, and then hidden in the sand. Slight moles of earth, many of which the wolves and jackals have disturbed, may be seen in the wilderness; graves of men who have fallen sick by the wayside, who have been left by their fellows to die alone, and who, in gasping out their lives, have just succeeded in covering their faces with a little sand.

The first time your horse shies at a bleeding carcass or stumbles over a pile of bones, your gorge will rise into the mouth and your nostrils close on the offence, yet in three months of Syrian travel you will learn to treat a skeleton in the road with as much indifference as a gentleman in a turban and a lady in a veil.

While she is yet in the broad lane between Jaffa and Yazor, Sabeah the swift, the beautiful, begins to gib and start; on seeing which signs of a coming storm, I shorten the rein and touch her flank with a spur. Off like a shot she flies, brisk as a racer, mettlesome as a colt, clean through the hot hedges of prickly pears into the open plain and the cooler air; but in less than ten minutes she is blown and spent. We are a mile in advance, for Saïd must hold on by the baggage mule, who cannot caper and trot under her weight of kitchen-range, iron beds, and tent. If we stand and wait in the sun, Sabeah

pricks and snaps at my shoes, which, not being sheathed in iron like those of her usual riders, lie tempting to her teeth. Thinking she must be thirsty, like myself, we spurt forward along the track towards a fountain which we can see in the distance, white and alluring, guarded by a sheikh; but on my riding up to it, and dismounting from the mare, the sheikh makes signs to me that of this sweet water, in this dry season, horses may not be allowed to drink. "Further on," he says, "at Beit Dejan, there is a wheel with a camel tank;" and the train having now come up, and the laws of the well being explained by Ishmael, we prick on together, Sabeah, unmindful of my cares in her behalf, still snapping at my feet.

At Beit Dejan, on a slight twist in the road, we find the wheel and well, and hear a delicious plash and rustle in the troughs. To slip from my seat, to dip Sabeah's nose into the fluid, is the work of a second; but no sooner has she lapped up a mouthful of water, than one sees that the refuse falling back from her lips into the tank, is dabbled and red. Opening her mouth, I find a gorged leech dangling from her gum. But the reptile being snipt off, and the mare's nose dipt into the cooling stream, the blood still flows from between her teeth, and forcing them open, I find two other leeches lodged in the roof of her mouth. Poor little beast! how grateful and relieved she seems; how gay, how gentle, when I have torn these suckers from her flesh and soused the water about her wounds; and how my hunting-whip yearns to descend on the

shoulders of that laughing and careless Nubian slave!

Two minutes' walk from this well, half hidden among palms and olives, lies Beit Dejan, once Beth Dagon, House of Dagon, the ancient fish-god of Philistia, emblem of fecundity by land and sea. Dagon, a marine divinity, was adored under the form of a merman; a being which had a human bust and a dolphin's tail; a Syrian Poseidon, with a difference in the lower parts, an obvious deity for a people going down to the sea in ships. The great temples raised in his honour stood at Gaza and Ashdod, a few miles on our right; but the merman worship extended along the coast, and perhaps far into the plain. By him Goliath swore, and in one of his temples, Samson, when shorn and blind, was slain. Less, however, for the sake of Samson than out of love for him who sang the Agonistes, we rode round the cluster of loose stones and shining gardens which bear the name of Dagon now, saying softly to ourselves:

> This day a solemn feast the people held,
> To Dagon, their sea idol, —

and calling to mind that story of the ark, when the Philistines prevailed against Hophni and Phineas, the sons of Eli, and the ark was set up in the temple of Dagon, and the sea-idol was thrown down in the night, his head and the palms of his hands being cut off, and his tail and trunk, his ignoble parts, were left.

On passing Beit Dejan, the country opens; gardens and enclosures cease; the creamy-pink sands fall back into the rear; great herds of sheep and goats, of buffaloes and camels, roam through the plain. We come upon no more wells.

Strange bands of men are going up to Jerusalem on foot; poor Jews from Posen and Tangiers; Christian pilgrims from La Plata or Trebizond; wild Moslems from the Punjab and the Soudan; for Jerusalem is a holy place to nearly all the children of men. The Jew is going up to Zion, that he may die in the city of his fathers, and mingle with the dust of patriarch and seer; the Christian that he may kiss the stone of redemption, and light his taper at the sacred fire; the Moslem that he may gaze on the seat of judgment, and recite his prayer under the dome of the Rock. They have come, these poor wild men, from every corner of the globe, come in hunger and thirst, through frost and fire, bringing with them neither purse nor scrip, neither food nor drink. They are the only pilgrims. They trudge in the heat of day, they sleep under the stars by night. Through the desert wastes, and the corn lands, and the date countries, they wend their unflagging way; asking, in the name of God, for a little black bread here, a bunch of grapes or a mouthful of lentils there; and slaking their thirst from the wayside well. Few of these men can speak a word of the native tongue. In the group which we are now passing through near Ramleh, are men of tropical race, a Cingalese, an Ilanoon, two or three Malays; in the last group on the road

there was a negro from Zanzibar. Nearly all these Christian and Moslem hajjees are converts to the faith, burning with the zeal that consumes the bosom in which fire has been newly lit. Yakoub, and men like Yakoub, have a kingly disdain for these travellers in rags; but Saïd is kind to them, giving them good words, and sharing with them his melon and his bread.

These hajjees are the lowly ones of the earth. Grimy with dirt, lean with privation and fatigue—their coats made of skin, their shirts hanging in rents—they are respected by the good Syrian peasants as men engaged in performing a sacred vow. Though his own hut may be wretched and his shelf bare of food, the fellah will never refuse to share with them his shelter and his crust.

These hajjees going up to the Holy City are not our only comrades of the road. From time to time, a cloud of dust, a gleam of spears, inform us of a troop of Bedaween flying in hot haste along the noiseless plain. They come in threes and fives; well armed, well mounted men; eager of eye, resolute of lip; bands going south towards Gaza and Ashdod, as though the war-cry had been raised, and a meeting-place had been named.

By their looks, by their accoutrements, they appear to be either Akeel's men or some tribe in league with the Hanadi who obey that troublesome sheikh. It being of moment that we should learn what we can of Akeel, Yakoub now and then pricks off to a point where he must cross the path of these

riders; but he only wastes his time, and throws jebilé into the dirt, for the party is nearly always a family of the Anezi, who either know very little, or have orders to be dumb.

"Bedaween very close, Master," says the scout; "Cabouli at Tiberias; Akeel not there; Akeel nowhere; only fires and robberies everywhere."

A sleepy dawdle through the orchards among which Lion-Heart and his English bowmen lay so long, brings you to the gates of Ramleh in the sands, a city surrounded by empty cisterns and teeming cemeteries; the approaches to the Latin convent being defended by a forest of prickly pears. A howl of wild dogs, a welcome like that which Saladin gave the English knights, salutes your visit; but the sun is too strong for their vice, and after yelping in angry chorus for a moment, they crawl into shade and drop into a doze.

After much pounding at the convent door with stones, a head in a cowl is seen peeping cautiously above the wall; and a pair of insolent black eyes make inventory of our number and estimate of our state. On a quick admonition to be alive, the cowl drops back; and in about an hour, as it seems to our impatience, a wicket in the gate is opened, when, a parley having taken place, and the fathers being satisfied as to the condition of our creed and purse, a heavy beam is heard to fall, a massive chain to rattle, and then the door grates slowly back to a width admitting a dismounted man and beast.

We stride into an open court, over the wall of which the fruit of a palm tree hangs in golden bunches, and the gate is again locked fast and safe.

CHAPTER V.

The Convent of Ramleh.

A MERRY fat old padre, Angelo by name, receiving us at the gate, leads us away into a square dark room, having a range of sofa, stuffed with coarse grain and populous with fleas, and a small open window, through which the cool air of a covered chamber floats in and fans us. Kicking off boots and spurs, laying down belts and pistols, we recline and pant, longing for a draught of fresh water to allay the thirst, but bowing to the wise old padre, who, slow and pursy, counsels a mere rinse of the mouth, a sip of lemonade, a cup of hot coffee, boiled thick and black, and the soothing whiff of a chibouque. It is hard to resist sucking the temptation down into one's throat; but Angelo prevails, and in ten minutes the coffee and jebilé have wrought a miraculous cure.

While dinner is being cooked in the convent kitchen, there is time for a stroll through this town of Mohammedan Ramleh, once the Ramula of Lion-Heart, and to push through the prickly pears and multitudinous graves towards the rent arches and walls of an ancient khan, caravan-serai, or wayside inn, from one angle of which ruin springs the famous minaret of the White Mosque, an edifice rivalling in

grace and lightness the more celebrated dome of the Rock.

The wide pathway running below this minaret is the great caravan road from Cairo to Damascus, along which all the overland commerce of Egypt and Persia has to pass on camels. It is not much of a road, having no pavement, hedge, and ditch; but a king's highway is unknown to the East. In our English Bible the word "road" occurs only once, and then it is used in the sense of raid—an in-road. We hear of paths, of ways; never of roads, which must be regal works, the offspring of art and the production of a settled peace. A Greek, a Roman made roads; an Arab, a Jew, never. A dweller in tents (and whether he lodge in a house, or sleep under a tree, the spirit of a Syrian is still that of a dweller in tents) detests a path so easy that wheels can roll and cannon may be drawn along it. To such a man a great road seems a great peril. "Why smooth the rocks from Jaffa to Jerusalem?" asks Suraya, "that the Russians may send their siege guns to Mount Zion?" An Oriental feels no want of roads, for he never dreams of riding in araba, coach and cart. It is true that these flints would kill a good horse, but a native of Syria never rides such a thing. We hear so much of the Arabian mares, and we know so well about the Bedaween's flights, that we are apt to consider these Orientals as a nation of horsemen. It is all a dream. The Bedaween rides, for his safety in the desert depends on his speed; but the Arab of towns and of settled life never mounts a horse. When he does not care

to walk, he bestrides an ass. Indeed, the common Oriental feels a respect for the noble beast which prevents him from associating it freely with his daily doings; and if we may judge from the wall paintings of Egypt, the warriors of Pharaoh, though they yoked their horses to chariots, never got upon their backs. And now, as in the days of Pharaoh, a horse is considered as an engine of war, not a beast of burden; a proud plaything of caliphs, not a creature to be ridden by farmers and citizens in their upstart pride. Priests ride on donkeys, pashas on mules. I met the Seraskier of Damascus riding through the desert on a mule. Ibrahim of Egypt, the dashing cavalry officer, rode from Cairo to Konieh on an ass. While, therefore, his homely beast trots nimbly over the broken stones, what call has an Oriental to mend his road? If he can pick his way along it, all is well; but to do so his eye must be sure; for even this road from Cairo to Damascus, though it follows the plain and the sea, may be lost by a careless rider in the blaze of noon.

Returning to the convent, in waking the wild dogs you rouse an officer of customs, who, pipe in mouth, and sword in hand, starts up from a doze and motions you to halt. The den out of which he darts is a scoop in the wall of thorns, such as in England we should cut in our laurel trees and box. The gaudy and dirty fellow carries a bunch of pistols in his belt, at once for ostentation and defence. His office is to stop all caravans and traders on the road; to examine their wares; and to collect from them all

duties which have been laid by the Sultan and the Pasha. But his interruption is only another form of demanding tip. Pay it and pass on; a piastre, with a pinch of jebilé, will satisfy this turbaned officer of your being an honest man.

Like the women of every part of Syria, those of Ramleh wear trousers, while their husbands and sons wear skirts; but the ladies of this noble plain have another habit of dress, which may sometimes put a Saxon to the blush. In the doorways, in the streets, on the flat roofs of Ramleh, young and pretty damsels may be seen with their faces covered to the eyes, and their bosoms naked to the waist. The yelek, a vest, is worn by these ladies open at the front. A girl, it is true, wears a chemisette beneath her yelek; but among the roses of Sharon it is the fashion to cut this chemisette away from the bust, so that when the yelek is left open, as it is always left by the ladies of Ramleh and Jaffa, the graces of the feminine bosom are abundantly exposed. The sight is not always lovely. As a rule, a Syrian's bust has little of that height, that roundness of line, which the Prophet of Islam is said to have loved in the sex, and which the Arabian story-tellers extol in Safie. Rarely are the breasts small and round, like two pomegranates of equal size; in truth, they hang loose and long, and appear to the eye of every beholder veined and coarse. Exposure to heat and dust soon dyes the original gold of a peasant's skin to the darkness of a Bedaween's cheek; and as to shape and fulness, it is

said that a young mother on a journey never stops to give her child the breast, but tosses the teat over her shoulder for the babe to suck.

A mixed and voluble society sits down to dinner in the cool dim convent room, most of the men being ecclesiastics, papas and padres, monks and friars, with appetites which Angelo, kindly and over-fed, smiles unctuously to see. That dear old man has not carried his serge gown, his rope belt and cowl, through a dozen miles of sun. Some of us have ridden from Jaffa, some from Jerusalem, and some from Gaza since the morning dawned; so that each has either a fear to communicate or a tale to tell. English and Arabic, Russian and Romaic, Armenian and Italian, rattle round the board, while the handy fathers are serving up the stewed olives and fowls, the green figs and cheese, the roast eggs and water melons; everyone talking, no one listening; the riot growing louder when our hosts have replaced the poor thin fluid on the table by a strong aromatic Cyprus wine. Akeel Aga, the Galilee sheikh, is either the hero or the inspiration of every tale.

A date merchant from Egypt tells how, in riding past El Mejdal and Beit Dûrâs, near Gaza and the sea, he had seen a good many black tents along the sand, from which he inferred that a signal has been given to the tribes, and that Akeel is retiring to the south. A Jew from Nabulus reports of robberies and murders in every hamlet of Ephraim. A monk from Mar Saba says the wadies of the wilderness are unsafe, and the tribes beyond Jordan

are astir. An Armenian pedlar, fresh from Mount Zion, says the holy city is alarmed, and Suraya is about to proclaim it in a state of siege. But our best story-teller, as becomes his age, his office, and his country, is a Greek Prior, who left his convent near the Holy Sepulchre at dawn, going on a sad errand to Jaffa and Stamboul. The physician of his convent has been robbed and killed; and the Greek Prior is going to Constantinople in search of a Frank successor to the murdered man.

This Frank doctor, a man of gentle bearing and of eminent skill, having lived his twenty years in Palestine, and being known to its people far and wide, could not be made to understand why a quarrel in Galilee between Cabouli and Akeel should frighten him from going a few miles into the country to see a friend. When told to take care, the old gentleman smiled, put on his hat, and rode away toward Nabulus through the Damascus Gate; to be found at that gate in the morning bruised and spent, his pulse at the last throb, the only garments left on his body being the crushed hat on his head and a loose rag round his loins.

Hailed in a lonely track by a dozen strange men, and told he must stop and strip, he had begun to urge on the rough fellows that he was a doctor and a Frank. But the Arabs had no time for talk. To Bedaween thieves the art of robbery has never been one of the fine arts, and knowing nothing of the history of Claude du Val, they have acquired no taste for the more delicate doings of the highway. They never touch their hats to a lady whom

they rob, never throw back letters and keys to a gentleman whom they despoil of his lighter trash. They just drag a man down from his saddle, seize upon his horse and arms, tear the clothes from his back, divide his money and his jewels, and then either stun him with a club or rope him to a tree. Before his senses can return to him, they are gone, with his horse, his gun, his boots, his shirt, and everything that was his. The story of the man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves, is repeated in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem from day to day, so that the lesson of the parable never becomes stale.

Despite of his prayers and threats, the Frank physician was stripped and cuffed. Before his face the Bedaween rascals divided his effects; one getting his horse, a second his repeater, a third his coat, a fourth the contents of his saddle-bags. His hat alone seemed to give them pause; they could neither sit upon it, nor carry water in it, nor shoe horses with it; so they tossed it on the ground and left it, the most precious salvage in his wardrobe to the poor old man. Coming to his wits when they were gone, he began to retrace his steps. Staggering over the stones and through the sun, his feet all torn, his skin all scorched, he found his way, naked as the babe just born, to a peasant's hut, where he obtained a rag and a drink of water. Toiling through the night, now resting on a stone, now binding up his wounds in the coarse grass and planta genista, he reached the Damascus Gate before it was yet day, and sitting

down on a mound of earth, was there found, fainting and speechless, by the Turkish guard. At noon that day he died.

Such was the tale told by the Greek Prior, and every word of it proved to be true. Having told his story very well, and having frightened everybody, the Greek Prior says grace, and the company rises and shakes itself free from the glamour of his words.

Eight or ten friars are lounging on the convent roof; some finishing their prayers; some smoking cigarettes; some grinning over the wall at a colony of dogs, which are improving the cooler hour by fighting and making love. The Jew has gone to his cell, the Armenians are pacing their whitewashed court. Though the sun is still up, many of the guests are making ready for bed, for the horses are to be saddled at one, and the caravan is to move at two o'clock, so as to pass by El Kubâb, the most dangerous point on the road, by dark, reaching Latrûn, the ancient Modin, by the hour of dawn.

The air is warm, and the spirit languid. Ishmael sets a stool, a narghiley, a cup under a canopy of vines, and on a clap of the hands brings coffee and the charcoal fire. Two or three stragglers lounge on the convent roof, inhaling the Lebanon leaf and watching the sun go down into the sea. Half an hour after sunset Ramleh seems asleep, the silence being unbroken save by the drone of an insect or the snarl of a restless dog. Putting away the pipes, we take a last turn on the roof, a last peep over the wall. The fathers are issuing out of chapel and

going into their cells. The dogs have crawled away under the prickly pears. The fire of the far west is fading into green and grey. A string of camels, led on by an ass's colt, is bobbing into the town. A veiled figure pauses for an instant like a spirit at our convent gate, and then flits by. The fans of a large palm tree sway and sigh; the tower of the White Mosque shines like a jewel in the dusk; and the evening stars throb slowly into lustrous life.

Good-night, good-night!

CHAPTER VI.

Night Ride to Modin.

DREAMING of Modin, and of all that this name of Modin had once meant in Israel—revolt against Epiphanes, war, glory, nationality—my hours of rest fly swiftly into midnight. About one o'clock (when the old priest had been laid in his princely tomb, and his heroic sons, having saved their country, and being crowned with every gift which their countrymen could lawfully bestow upon them, were about to seize into their own hands that sacred office which none but God could give away) Ishmael creeps into my cell and dissolves the dream.

Not as a right, but as a joke, one of the Italian padres has given Ishmael a tumbler of fluid for the Saxon's face, telling him that the Greek Prior and the Jew merchant, having more sense than to dip their noses into cold water of a morning, are already in the guest-room of the convent, waiting for breakfast, and in the absence of stronger fare are burning a bit of charcoal on a few shreds of Lebanon leaf. A meal of hot coffee, hard eggs, grapes, olives, white bread, and poor red wine, awaits us in the refectory, where Padre Angelo is moping round the table, his eyes half open and his soul asleep. At one in the night some thirty sinners sit down to eat and drink; a lamp of the pattern

found in Pompeii lighting the room with a red and fitful glare. Most of those who dined and made merry are again at table; but less talkative than they were last night; each man appearing as if he feels that with another day a new adventure has begun. Who among us can say where he will sleep to-night?

About two o'clock, saying our adieus to Angelo, who pockets his piastres and prays for our safe arrival in Jerusalem, Saïd, Yakoub and the rest of us file through the convent gate; man, horse, ass, and camel; making a caravan about seventy weak. Two or three ladies are supposed to have joined us; seated in panniers on their camels; but the night is too dark to see whether they are Frank or Oriental. A dozen friars, of various sects and head-gears, ride on donkeys in our wake. These gentlemen in serge had planned to be away from the convent by one o'clock, but the sight of two English revolvers, working on the suggestion of uneasy dreams, in which the Frank physician and his Bedaween plunderers had probably played their parts, induced the holy and nervous men to wait our going, and falling into the line of march, to take up a safe position between the baggage and its protecting fire.

Cool and fresh flows the morning wind upon our temples and through our lungs, as we escape from the pent lanes and streets of Ramleh into the open plain. A colony of dogs, waking up into life as we clatter through the eastern gate, greet our departure from their city with the same wild music that made our welcome. Sabeah jogs on drowsily in the dark,

less like a mare of the desert, which should be all fire and spirit, than like a pedlar's hack; but the cold night air, blowing down from the hills into our mouths, inclines both man and beast to sleep.

On our eyes getting used to the starlight, we can see that though our horses' feet plough heavily into the soil, our march is along a beaten track, open to the fields, broad and soft, as if water were near, something like a waggon-way through a Suffolk field. Dozing and dreaming along the spongy road, a priest's donkey now runs against a camel, and rolls into the dust; the overturned padre roaring at the top of his voice for help, which not a man in the caravan has the heart to lend. All modes of travel, like all forms of warfare, harden and sear the heart; but searing and hardening beyond all other mode of travel is that of roving in such a country as Syria becomes in a time of disorder like that occasioned by the revolt of Akeel Aga. A man who is mounted on a fleet mare, armed with a stout whip and a good revolver, finds it difficult to feel for the miseries of a beggar jolting along the road upon an ass. The good Samaritan must have been a most rare and noble fellow, worthy to adorn the most beautiful of parables. With us, the fall of a monk is hailed with a burst of merriment—especially from the priests and friars—and the fallen donkey and his load are laughingly left behind us in the darkness and the mud.

To shake the slumber from his eyelids, Yakoub, when we have cleared El Buweireh, the first hamlet on our line of march, pricks on ahead; and Sabeah,

catching at the thud of hoofs in the loam, breaks quietly into a trot. Her motion having startled me from a doze, we soon leave the Greek and Armenian fathers, with the camels and their fair burdens in our wake; and by the time we have reached Kubâb, the mass of our long procession can neither be seen nor heard. Ishmael only, trotting by the light luggage mule, is close upon our heels.

Kubâb, silent as the grave and treacherous as the sea, we pass through at a walk, unwilling to disturb a population which is only too apt either to beg from the strong, or to steal from the weak. This part of the great plain has an evil repute, which a good many travellers affirm that it has richly won. More than one hamlet in the neighbourhood has been lately burnt by the Turks: who have scorched many families of peasants from the land; in a righteous but inadequate return for their many and atrocious crimes. Having cleared the heap on which Kubâb stands, in the midst of olive trees and ridges of prickly pears, we catch a murmur as of horses' feet on our left, coming in the direction of Nuba or Noba, that town in which the Lion-Heart, of whose epic this plain is the scenery, paused so long.

"Horsemen!" cries Yakoub, reining in. Hushing the still night, and with hands on our revolvers, bending forward towards the dim fields on our left hand, we can hear the footfall of horses crushing their way through stubble and stones. In a moment, while they sounded afar off, they are among us; five dark figures, on brisk little mares, and poising above them their bamboo spears. A word or two of parley,

in which Ishmael has his share, and we are asking each other for the news; on one side, our little party in advance; on the other side, five armed Bedaween, not Akeel's own lambs the Hanadi, but men of the Anezi, a powerful tribe with whom he has made a league of friendship. We are going up the hills into Judah; they are crossing the plain towards Gaza, where the sheikhs have appointed them to meet. Perhaps they consider us too strong to be robbed; for a Bedaween rarely thinks it right to attack under an advantage of five to one; not from any fear for his skin, being personally brave as a wolf; but from having studied the art of robbery on the highways, and found that when otherwise conducted it does not pay. A Frank, when assaulted by thieves, is sure to fire, and not sure to miss his aim. He may kill a mare. In that case blood must be shed, and of all things in the world an Arab has a strong dislike to shedding blood. God has commanded him not to take life, and he believes that by divine appointment the curse of blood will fall upon his house.

Our Anezi friends beg a little bread and tobacco, which we give them, and a little powder, which we refuse. They expected to hear that English ships are at Jaffa, and French soldiers in Beyrout; and in return for our news of what is being done along the coast, they tell us that Hebron has revolted from the Turks, and that all the tribes beyond Jordan are in arms. Saying this, they make their salaam, and ride away into the night.

"Have they told us the truth, Yakoub?"

"The truth, Master!" says Yakoub with scorn. "Their religion will not suffer them to lie."

Day is just breaking on the hills in front; a faint first flush of dawn, as we near the hill on which Modin, birth-place of the Maccabees, once stood; and on which Latrûn, Ladrone, the robber's den, now stands. This hill—a mound under the great mountains, a hill on the level plain—controls the Bab el Wady—gate of the glen—the chief entrance on this side into the mountains of Judea; so that nature has made it to be for ever either a work of defence or a place of thieves. In truth, it has been each in turn.

The new name of Latrûn, completely superseding that of Modin, comes from Disma, the penitent thief; who is said to have been a bandit on this very road; lying in wait for merchants in the Bab el Wady; where, hiding behind rocks, and pouncing upon unarmed men, he spoiled them of their goods, and sometimes took away their lives. By a habit of the language and the people, such a hero was almost certain to give his name to the place in which he lived. Modin became Latrûn, as Bethany became El Azariyeh, and as Kirjath Jearim, afterwards known as Kuryet el Enab, Village of Vines, has become in our own day Abu Gosh.

But the charm which draws men to this heap of stones, this tangle of shrubs and thorns, is not derived from Disma and his misdeeds. It springs from that epical story of the Maccabees—the last victorious rising and resistance of the Jews—which,

even as a story, is nobler and more picturesque than that of the fabled siege of Troy.

Upon this high mound, Apelles, one of the Greek commissioners sent by Epiphanes, king of Syria, to put down Jehovah and set up Jupiter in His holy place, built an altar to idols, on which altar he commanded the people to come and offer up sacrifice. One recreant Jew, fearing the king and forgetting God, obeyed his summons; when the aged priest Mattathias, a man of noble lineage and saintly life, going up the hill with his five sons, their strong swords shining in their hands, set upon the idolatrous crowd, slew Apelles and the apostate Jew, broke down the idol-altar, scattered the king's commissioners and servants, and before the Greek soldiers and magistrates could act against them, fled away into the mountain passes. In these glens and heights over Modin, bold men began to gather round these outlaws, who became a band, a company, a battalion, exercising themselves in making raids, cutting off scouts, interrupting communications, spreading alarm in the cities and hope in the country. The old priest died; his body was laid on this mound; and his heroic son Judas, called the Lion of Judah, counting his forces, few in array, but in nature hardy and desperate men, ready to perish, commenced the actual national war. By night attacks, by sudden surprises, he taught his people how to fight and conquer. Alert of foot and quick of brain; yesterday in the mountains, to-day in the plain; now marching on a post, now storming a castle; Judas in a few months of service changed

his rabble of zealots into an army of solid troops, capable of meeting and repelling the royal hosts commanded by generals who had been trained in the Macedonian school of arms.

Judas met Apollonius, the Greek general commanding Samaria, and overthrew him. Next, he defeated Seron, general of Cœle-Syria, in the great battle of Beth-horon, the Morgarten of Jewry. Afterwards Lysias, assailing him in the still greater battle of Emmaus, the Sempach of Jewry, suffered a magnificent repulse; on which the victor marched into Jerusalem, cleansed that city of idols, purified the Temple hill, re-established Circumcision and the Sabbath, and solemnly dedicated the Holy of Holies to the living God. But his toils were not ended; for a new king of Syria sent fresh armies, under Nicanor, against the patriots. Judas met and overthrew Nicanor in the terrible field of Adasa. Then came a cloud from another side, and the Lion of Judah fell fighting against enemies, outnumbering his forces twenty to one, and was buried with his father on this Modin mound. Jonathan and Simon, his heroic brothers, his equals in genius and address, if not in the fiery quality of his blood, succeeded to his command, and their sons became kings and high priests of the country which he had saved.

Yakoub stands near the horses, while Ishmael leads the way by a quiet lane to the summit; a wide space covered with ruins, perhaps of a palace, certainly of a tomb; from which a magnificent view of the broad plain, and of the bold valley of Ajalon, rewards the climber for his toil. Far off, the sea is

shining in the dawn, but unlike our English waters, is without a sail. Near us, in our front, rise the mountains into which Mattathias fled with his sons; vast, rugged, dark, abrupt. We could fire a shot into Bab el Wady at their feet. Above, to the left, perched high among the clouds, is Beth-horon; four miles from this place stood Adasa; and in the plain, here at our feet, beyond the camel path, lies the village of Amwâs, on the site of Emmaus. The country bristles with battle-fields, and the whole aspect of the land is heroic.

Modin is one of the centres of Jewish thought and action; for the Maccabees were priests as well as kings; and a man who overlooks its story, will be apt to stray when he comes to study the events of a later and more sacred drama than a national war.

Nobler servants than the Maccabees it would be hard to find in Israel; larger service than they rendered to their country it would be impossible to find. It is not enough to say that they found the Jews enslaved, and that they left them free. In a political sense, they made the country. When Mattathias struck down the pagan altar on Modin, putting his life, and the lives of all his sons, upon the issue of that daring act, Judah and Israel had become things of history, and the Israelite faith had been abolished by laws in which the people appeared to have acquiesced. The Temple was profaned; the usual reading of the law was prohibited; circumcision had ceased; Sabbath observance was

forbidden on pain of death; the succession of high priests was broken, Onias, the true pontiff, having fled away to the great Jewish community at Memphis on the Nile. Not one man in a thousand Jews could speak Hebrew; in its place the people made love and money in Chaldaic, Syriac, and Greek. Out of this prostrate misery, the genius, daring, and devotion of one splendid family raised the nation to a height of power recalling the glories of David's reign.

But, on the other side, the very qualities which enabled these princes to serve their country in a political sense, caused them to ruin it in a dogmatic sense. The Maccabees were men of the world; soldiers, orators, statesmen, rather than priests of God. In the course of their fiery struggle against the Gentile power they came to look upon religion as a part of their system of government, a branch of their policy, and a sign of their peculiar cause. Descending from the Babylonian Exiles, they belonged to the new class of men—the party of nationality and reform. Being able and daring men, whom no fear could restrain and no power could resist, when the public service seemed to demand a great concentration of public powers, they felt no scruple in seizing into their own hands offices incompatible with each other.

In short, the Maccabees led Israel away from the Mosaic theory of a divine government into the adoption of a worldly principle of nationality; a position in which the Jew lost his birthright of a uni-

versal priesthood; to which birthright he was not recalled until John went forth into the wilderness and began to baptize his countrymen back into the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER VII.

The Great Separation.

In a slight lay work, aiming no higher than to sketch some facts and sceneries which may assist in framing the sacred story, it will be sufficient to describe in a few words the points on which the Maccabean policy appears to have differed from that of the Written Law.

Moses had set the Spiritual Powers apart from the Temporal Powers; not as to persons only, but as to families and tribes; so that for thirteen hundred years of Hebrew life, no priest had ever been made a king. This first Mosaic principle was vitiated by the Maccabees, when a priest of Modin was raised to the throne of David, and the whole of his kinsmen were elevated to princely rank.

Moses had consecrated the line of Eleäzar the son of Aaron to the High Priesthood for ever. This second Mosaic principle was set aside by the Maccabees; Jonathan, the youngest son of Mattathias, a man who had no pretensions to the sacred office beyond those of power and opportunity, seizing the pontifical robes, going up to the Temple, and performing the holy rites.

Moses had given a Written Law to his people; a law which he had engraved on stone, and placed for safety in the ark; a law from which men were

forbidden to take one word, and to which they were equally forbidden to add one word. This third Mosaic principle, weakened by usage and events before the Maccabean reign, fell into complete neglect when the written code was amplified into the elaborate Oral Law.

Moses had appointed one faith, one service, for the whole body of Israel; who were to have one ark, one tabernacle, one covenant, one temple, in a word—one Church. This fourth Mosaic principle was disregarded under the Maccabees, in whose time the Separatists were established in political authority, and the Jews were divided into Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and other parties of less historical renown.

Moses had told his followers, in the awful Voice speaking out of Sinai, that the children of Jacob were called to a Universal Priesthood: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a nation of priests": and he had so framed his laws, precepts, and ordinances, that all the peculiarities of Hebrew life should be made to foster and preserve the sacramental truth of Israel being a living witness of Jehovah to the outer nations, an agency through which the whole earth should in time be reconciled to God. This fifth Mosaic principle was proudly repudiated by the Maccabees, who adopted the Separatist theory of national life, and withdrew their people from communion with the Gentile world.

Thus it came to pass, under the rule of these

brave and able men, that the Judge who led his followers out of Egypt, would have been a stranger to the great powers, the great institutions, the great bodies, which governed and divided Israel in the days of JESUS; to the synagogue, to the Sanhedrin, to the Great College, to the schools of Hillel and Shammai, to the princely high priests, to the Mishna, to Samaritan and Jew, to Pharisee, Sadducee, and Essene. A generation had grown up which knew Moses mainly as a traditionary figure, somewhat as a Greek remembered Lycurgus. Moses had become a name, a type, a landmark in the past; he was scarcely any longer a living fact. The Law which he had proclaimed from Sinai and bequeathed to Joshua, like the language in which he had talked with God and written down the divine commands, had been in a great measure forgotten by the Jews; having become the property of a learned caste, recruited from the schools. A Church which Moses would have known and David approved, no longer existed in any part of Syria; in its stead there was a church of the Sanhedrin, the princes, and the Separatists.

An outward and political change so vast could not have been produced by a single man, or by a single generation of men, however gifted and courageous, unless it had been prepared in the popular mind. The change had commenced in Babylon, and had come upon the Exiles in the seductive guise of culture and progress.

Those men of Judah and Benjamin who had been carried away captives from a poor country into

a rich one, from village labour into the magazines of a great city, from the companionship of rustics into a society in the last degree busy and refined, had found that in their new country the fields were better tilled, the houses better built, and the people better clad. Everything on which they gazed had seemed to them a lesson and a reproach. The fruits were riper, the wines were purer, the arts were nobler, than their own. For Babylon was the wonder of Asia; her walls being leagues in length, her gates numbered by the score; a temple of which the ruins make a hill, and a palace to which St. James's would be a kennel for dogs and lions, filling her royal quarter; an inland sea lying close by her ramparts; from which a broad canal bore ships to the Persian Gulf. Her hanging gardens won the admiration of Greeks who had exhausted every marvel of the Nile. A poor Hebrew in the streets of Babylon was like a Savoyard in the Rue Royale, a Shetlander at Charing Cross.

During the years of their captivity, the tribes had become a new people. Nearly two generations having lived and died in the great city and its neighbourhood, the young Israelites had grown up with strange ideas and habits of life. They had not yet ceased to plant vines and olives, to till the soil, to breed sheep and goats—for it was not until the later ages of Rome, when the Jews had lost their right to possess land, that they learned to become dealers and chapmen, to excel in the cunning of trade, to buy, and lend money, to understand jewels and perfumes, to practise magian arts, and to be

useful agents in the seraglio and the court; but even in Babylon, they had forgotten many of the feelings of husbandmen and shepherds, and acquired a new and unhappy preference for the luxuries of city life. As they grew rich in money and high in favour, pride of the heart and lust of the flesh had eaten into their souls; the elders and priests—the men of learning and science—being worse offenders than the young men and laymen, so that in after times it became a saying in Judea that, "wickedness came out of Babylon from ancient judges who seemed to govern the people." Along with this corruption of morals had come a change in the Hebrew creed, an addition to the Hebrew festivals, a modification of the Hebrew service. This change had not been sudden and revolutionary; it had stolen upon the people unawares; in the first place, from the loss of their native idiom and the disuse of their sacred books; in the second place, from the contact of Zoroastrian doctrines akin to their own; and in the third place, from such political events as the rise of Esther, the devotion of Daniel, and the conquest of Cyrus. A section of the Exiles had, after a time, set themselves apart from their brethren as reformers, calling themselves Pharisees, from "pharash," set apart; at first a patriotic and dissenting body (like our own early Puritans); but these dissenters had been scouted as heretics by those staunch old Hebrew Tories, the Sadducees. Still, this schism of the Separation spread. Every Hebrew educated in a Babylonian school was trained to understand his Law and his Prophets in a lay and even in a critical

spirit; and having ceased to speak Hebrew in his household, he could no longer study the Mosaic text for himself, or receive it from his teacher otherwise than through the medium of a foreign tongue.

Among the great changes wrought by the Exile was the growth of a strong affection on the part of all the captives for Chaldea the Palm country, and for Babylon the Gate of God. The rich, the learned, the high-born among them, declined to go back into the bleak mountain wastes of Judah; and even the masons and dyers, the weavers and tinkers, whom Cyrus had sent away to rebuild Jerusalem, sighed over the country they were leaving as a paradise on earth; a land of plenty, a land of great rivers and a bounteous soil, a land of pleasure, in which the seasons came and went with an indolent beauty unknown among their own barren ravines and rugged bluffs. A tender regret for Babylon became the poetry of their lives. The stories of Esther and Daniel made their favourite reading; and Jews who scarcely knew the name of Pharaoh could recite whole chapters from the Book of Daniel, and tell how Vashti had offended the king Ahasuerus, and how Esther, their countrywoman, had been promoted into her place. Purim, a Babylonish feast, became their favourite festival of the year.

Arrived in the land which had once been Judah and Israel, bringing with them fresh habits, a different language, and a foreign school of thought, the Exiles found in many parts of Palestine a people claiming to be of the same lineage, following the same law, and sacrificing to the same God as them-

selves, who had been instructed in a yet richer art, inspired by a far nobler genius, than they had left behind in the great city of Babylon. A wave had already washed over the plains of Syria from the Grecian isles—a wave that was afterwards to become a mighty flood. Not in Tyre and Sidon, in Joppa and Acco, in Gaza and Ashdod only, had the influence of this stream from the West been felt; but also in the hill countries and the inland cities, in Shechem and Sephoris—in some degree, perhaps, in Jerusalem itself. And since the date of that return from exile, this tide of western civilization had been every day flowing into the land with a greater force; after the Greek conquest of Asia, it had set in with a more majestic motion than before. Thus, the new culture which the Jews brought home from Babylon had been met and tempered by the arts of Cyprus and Antioch, until the people, nearly all of whom had now become dissenters and Separatists, passed under the persecution of Epiphanes, the revolt of Modin, and the Maccabean war, into that stage of their moral and spiritual growth which brought upon them the Roman war, and led to their dispersion over the face of the earth.

Having served their country like Joshua and Gideon, the Maccabees were invited by the public voice to seize all offices and powers; to drill the armies, to instruct the priests, to inspire the schools. They were not slow to act on such a hint; and as both the army in the field, and the nation in the synagogue, with the exception of a few Sadducean priests and nobles, had become Separatists, the spirit

in which the Maccabees fell to this work of drilling and instructing their people was that of the new epoch, not of the old. But whether they idolized mere rites and ceremonies, or withdrew their people from the community of nations, who could oppose them? Not their companions in glory. It was in nature that men who had fought at Beth-horon, Emmaus, and Adasa, should cling with ardour to those rites and ceremonies which Epiphanes had forbidden on pain of death. Circumcision, Sabbath observance, Temple service, having been all prohibited in the names of Zeus and Apollo, the victors of Adasa took to cherishing these rites and ceremonies, not only as parts of their ritual, but the very soul of their creed. The first act of every people restored by valour to its national life is to set up its native gods. If the Jewish hero of Beth-horon made idols of his recovered rites, as degrading to his moral nature as the worship of any marble Love or Terror to be found in the pantheons of Greece and Rome, who could restrain his martial frenzy? The nobles who rejected the Pharisaic heresy had lost all weight and influence in the camp. The Pharisee held the sword. The pontifical family had been torn by feuds, and Onias, the true high priest by succession from the days of Aaron, had gone away to Egypt. Jacimus, a man of Aaron's line, had been appointed in his room, but after his death, the Maccabees had left the highest office in Israel empty until more peaceful times, when Jonathan, seizing a golden chance, went up to the Temple and assumed the pontifical robes.

The revolution had now triumphed; the Mosaic high priest being driven away into Egypt, and a Separatist prince established on his throne.

For the first time in Israel, and contrary to all the Mosaic traditions, a king of men was made a priest of God. Other changes followed. Priests of a lower rank were appointed judges and magistrates; a secular spirit appeared in the Temple and in the Great College; and heavenly truths were darkened by the shadow of earthly facts. People were led to associate rank and pomp with the sacred office; and on seeing the sacerdotal orders living in palaces, and deciding on questions of peace and war, many persons were seduced into the fatal error of interpreting the Messianic prophecies in a mundane sense.

On the other side, the royal race, remembering that they were kings of the earth, too often forgot that they were servants of God. Some of these princes, endowed with the rarest gifts of genius, ruled the country which they had saved with transcendent skill. Yet their reign, as an order of royal priests, was in the last degree barren of abiding good. It is not given to kings to reconcile God and Mammon.

Knowing that the new order of things might be contested out of the sacred books, the Separatists, who supported the new political system, took their stand on the principles of a second Law for which they asserted an equal antiquity and authority. This writing was known at first as "the traditions of the

Elders" and, together with its later amplifications, is now called the Oral Law.

From the days of Jonathan to those of Titus the whole life of Israel, public and personal, turned on the principles of this Pharisaic code.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Oral Law.

THE Separatist code, called the Oral Law, which may be found rough and unready in the Mishna, was not a forgery, like the Isidorian Decretals, nor a secular work perverted to spiritual mischief like the Book of Mormon. It was a genuine growth of time and practice, like the corpus of our English non-statute law, which in the later days of Jewish independence was allowed, like very much judge-made law elsewhere, to supersede the original text. In heart and substance, this great body of jurisprudence consisted of a noble and efficient series of civil laws; but alongside of much that was noble, there was a great deal of crude and trivial matter: rules, opinions, commentaries, disputations, on the moral and ceremonial injunctions given in the Five Books of Moses: some parts of this collection being older perhaps than the reign of Cyrus; other parts going back to the Revolt of Modin; the rest having no higher antiquity than the days of Hyrcanus and Herod the Great. So long as these rules had no authority beyond what they drew from their own manifest merit, and while every Jewish school could debate and reject them, they could do no more harm than the commentaries of our own counsel on points of law; but when the Great College had pronounced

these interpretations of the Law to be of equal age and repute with the Covenant itself, what evil there lay in them began to work. The Jewish lawyers made this declaration in no uncertain terms; for the policy, the greatness, and the safety of their new empire depended on the public acceptance of this Oral Law. They said their explanation of the Written Law had been given to Moses, who had left it, not to Aaron's line, but to Joshua the lay soldier, from whom it had come down through the judges and prophets unto the latest times. This explanation of the origin and descent of the Oral Law could have been given only to a people who had lost their language, and with it the habit of consulting their sacred books. The upper classes, having leisure for study, and continuing to speak and write Hebrew, had never adopted this theory of a double law, one written, the other traditional. The nobles knew nothing of these traditions. Yet not the less had the Oral Law become the Separatist's gospel, regulating every movement of Jewish life.

Mystery surrounded the Oral Law. The pupils of the Great College were taught to regard it as a secret no less than a sacred institute. It was a holy, incommunicable thing, never to be mentioned in a stranger's presence, never to be written in human speech. When, in progress of time, it had been reduced to writing for the use of rabbins and doctors, a curse was pronounced upon any one who should translate it into either Greek or any heathen tongue. Even among those who could read Hebrew it was

not to be made a topic of common discourse. No slave was allowed to read it; no woman, no child, was ever to learn it. A Gentile must not be told its rules and principles. Even in the household it was to be held in extremest reverence. A Jew who spent his days and nights in studying it must not discuss its doctrines with his wife. It was not to be mentioned at table; and although it professed to be the rule of every man's life, it was never to be communicated to a servant or a girl. To teach any part of the Oral Law to a woman was a sin.

But while the study of this law was fenced around with anathemas and prohibitions, it was declared to every Jew, above all to a canonist, that this study was a bounden duty; for by the rules and precepts of this law he would have to regulate every action of his life, from cleaning his teeth and rinsing his hands up to the true way of keeping the yearly Passover and reciting his daily prayers.

In later times, a Jew was taught to divide his hours of study into three parts, one part of which he was to give to the Pentateuch, one to the Mishna, and one to the Gemara; that is to say, one hour to the Pentateuch and two hours to the Talmud. In manhood he was recommended to give most of his leisure to the Talmud; leaving the Law of Moses to the young men and priests: who were supposed to be less familiar with its tenets. Of course, the Separatist law supported the new institutions in Church and State; ruled in the Sanhedrin; prescribed prayers and alms; regulated the breadth of a phylactery, and the thickness of a veil; fixed the ceremonies of

the new year; directed the reading of the law; legislated for the sabbath and the great feasts; ascertained the conduct of Jews to Gentiles; inculcated due reverence from the people towards the Rabbi or Master of the Law.

In the word and in the spirit this Separatist law (as we possess it in a later form), was not unfrequently opposed to the ordinances and institutions bequeathed to Israel in the sacred books.

By the Mosaic plan, the children of Israel had been a people set apart for good; that they might grow into a great nation and learn to serve one God; that they might teach the true faith through facts, and prepare the Gentiles for salvation. Under the Maccabean system, the Jews appeared to the outer world of Pagan nations to be a people set apart for evil, to quarrel amongst themselves, to fall away into sects, to disgust strangers by their pretence, and provoke chastisement by their pride. Instead of being a light to the Gentiles, they were become a rock of offence.

Nothing in the covenants made by God with his people had sanctioned the idea that Hebrew and Greek were men of different orders. Everything in those covenants had implied that Hebrew and Gentile were common children of the same God, though Israel had been chosen as the son by whom the whole family should be glorified and saved. The God of the Hebrews had been called the God of the Gentiles, and the sins of one people had been punished by Him no less sternly than those of the other. The most eminent men among the Hebrews had

been friends of strangers; marrying into their houses and bringing blessings into Israel through their wives. Rachel, Zipporah, Ruth, had been aliens in blood. Joseph had married the daughter of an Egyptian priest, Solomon the daughter of an Egyptian king. But under the Separatist law such friendly feelings had for a moment been put away. No new Rachel could be wooed into Israel, no second Ruth could be engrafted into the royal line; for a law of sharp estrangement, a law hostile to strangers as strangers, had now come into force.

Many of the rules now found in the Talmud, with much of the practice based upon those rules, were the unnatural growth of persecution, misery, and war: sudden measures adopted in the face of sudden calamities; and, in truth, the classical writers show that on the whole a dark, unsocial spirit distinguished the Palestinian Jew in the latter ages of his national life.

Of course, when the legions were camping in Judea, and the Greeks peopling Galilee, it would not have been easy for the Jews to carry out any of the hostile provisions of their code. An alien who busied himself about their law, who observed one of their sabbaths, who appointed for himself a holy feast, was held to be worthy of death but while the Romans were masters in Syria, no man could be crucified until his sentence of death had received the sanction of judges more merciful than the fanatics of the Separation. Except in popular riots, when a preacher might be stoned, or a soldier stabbed, no man, whatever his offence, could be put

to death by the Jews; yet the spirit of the Maccabean law was partial and unjust towards every one living under a foreign flag. If a Syrian lost a camel, and a Jew found it, the Syrian could not follow and claim his own; but when a Jew lost a camel, and a Syrian found it, the Jew could follow and recover it by force. A Jew who stole a hundred shekels from another Jew, had to pay back a hundred and twenty shekels, a fifth part of the sum stolen being paid as penalty for the wrong done; but if a Jew stole the same amount of money from a Greek, he had to repay the hundred shekels only; a good Gentile having, in the eyes of this law, no equal rights against a rogue of the chosen race. Again, a Jew who had slain a Greek by accident or a sudden blow, had to fly into one of the cities of refuge: Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem in Samaria, Hebron in Judea; but a Greek who by accident or a sudden blow had killed a Jew, was considered worthy of death.

Not a word in the covenants made by God with his people sanctioned the new idea that a priest ought to exercise earthly power, either in the Sanhedrin or on the throne. In the olden time there had been no distinction between the priesthood and the people, save that of office. Israel being a kingdom of priests, all equals, all in a state of grace, none was accounted holier, none worthier, than his brethren. The sons of Aaron had been servants of God and the people; standing at the tabernacle door; heaping wood on the fire; pouring oil into the golden lamp; slaughtering the ram, the bullock, and

the dove; sprinkling the altar of burnt offerings with blood; partaking of good men's feasts; instructing children in the law; purifying young mothers; and assisting jealous husbands to detect the transgressions of their faithless wives. As an order, they had been poor and of slight account; objects of charity rather than of dread. But the Separatist law had brought a doctrine into vogue which exalted teacher and lawyer to a rank like that enjoyed by the ulema in Stamboul, and the monsignore in Rome. In this new light the Masters were regarded as an order of nobles; the title of rabbi being considered as equal to that of lord. Love, respect, obedience, were to be paid to all teachers of the sacred law. A Jew was told that his highest merit was to seek their society, to invite them into his house, to court their daughters in marriage. A common Jew could not presume to salute a rabbi in the street, but must bow down before him, saying, with hushed breath and lowly reverence, "Peace be unto thee, Rabbi." A young man was taught that his first duty was to his teacher; to bear his rabbi's burden, to fetch his rabbi's drink, to load his rabbi's ass. No other duty, not even that of a son to a father, was to come between the pupil and his teacher. If a man's father and his rabbi were each in want of food, he was to feed the rabbi first; were the two men naked, he must clothe the rabbi with his cloak; were they taken captive, he must raise money for the rabbi, leaving the ransom of his parent to an after-time. It was a maxim in this new code of morals, that fear of the rabbi had the same purifying virtue as

fear of the Lord; and this unnatural exaltation of the canonists and lawyers, which caused them to be popularly accepted as divinely inspired teachers, led the way to a complete prostration of all independent and individual thought.

The main issues, then, as regards faith and policy in Israel, of that glorious Revolt of Modin, was the elevation of a fighting sect to power; the general adoption of Separative principles; the substitution of an explanatory law for the Covenant; a change in the divine succession of high priests; and a lawless union of the spiritual and the secular forces.

CHAPTER IX.

The Wady Aly.

WILLING to avoid the gentry of Latrûn, who are said to be a gang of cruel thieves, we drop quietly down the hillside and spring into our saddles just as the village dogs have found us out, and we are spurring through the rosy light towards Wady Aly before the villagers come into the open with their spears and matchlocks. A huge, square block, of ancient date, which the Arabs call Deir Eyûb, stands close to the glen, but why such a building — evidently a Crusader's fort — is called Job's Convent, there is not a soul to tell. At Bab el Wady, a rough shed, kept by a fellah, offers you a little shelter, a cup of coffee, a pipe of jebilé, and even a broken chair. This shed—a rude form of the Syrian khan, caravan-serai, or wayside inn—is open on three sides to the sun and rain; but a wall of loose stones serves to keep out those wolves and jackals which abound in the ravines higher up the glen, and are sometimes seen ravening about the plain. A roofed kennel is the lodging-place for women and children, who, like the men, their companions, lie in rows on the bare earth, folded in their veils and sacks. A dozen poor Jews and Arabs, two of them women, are sleeping on the

ground. One wild fellow is engaged in boiling coffee, a second is making lemonade, a third is rinsing the hookahs and replenishing the bowls. A gulp of fresh water, even though it be warm and putrid, soothes the burning tongue; but neither soft words nor piastres will persuade these Arab peasants to give me a pail of water for Sabeah, though she is literally shedding tears of agony from thirst. The nearest well being dry, every drop of water for the hookah, the coffee, and the lemonade, must be fetched in skins, a two hours' journey. Shall an Arab give the poor man's drink to the rich man's beast?

In every part of the East, among every class of people, a man is tender to his horse, his camel, and his ass, beyond the usage of any Christian land. In Syria, a man's beast is a member of his family, to be cherished and loved in its degree as a creature given into his care by God. Sometimes Orientals carry this tenderness to excess. They have asylums for aged cats. They leave legacies to birds. Pigeons are fed from the mosque. A Turk will cross over a street to avoid waking a cur. An Arab studies painless ways of killing sheep and fish for the table. If you see a man striking a dog in Cairo or Stamboul, you may be sure he is a Frank. But, in Palestine, water is one of those gifts in which man has the first and the only indefeasible right. The present season being dry, water is scarce, and all that love can do for Sabeah is to dash upon her blistering lips a drop of lemonade. A crust of brown bread, brought in the saddle-bags from Ramleh, a slice of cold melon, a cup of black coffee, and a long pull

at the hookah, send us merrily away from the khan at Bab el Wady into the mountain gorge.

This Wady Aly, named after a Moslem saint, is far from being the worst ascent in Palestine; yet nothing in my own experiences of mountain paths, confined to such countries as Calabria, Granada, the hilly parts of Morocco, and the wild regions above Smyrna, has given me more than weird hints of the work to be done. There is no road at all. For a mile or more into the gorge there may be said to be a track, having shrubs on each side, and patches of maize fields to the right and left, as if little bits of the plain had come up into the hills and been kept there, and made to bud and bloom in sport. Aged olive trees are common, also myrtles, and laurels and laurustinas. The planta genista grows everywhere gaily among the stones. Mounting higher and higher up the rocky stairs, you find that the maize becomes thinner, the hawthorn and ilex, and dwarf oak, more abundant. Now we are moving along the bed of a torrent; the face of the rock, in its natural cleavage, shining on the surface. At every third step Sabeah pauses, strides, and slips. In a hundred places boulders and broken earth block up the road, while here and there the luxuriant ilex spreads like a net from one side to another of the narrow glen. What a lair for Disma, and for men of his trade!

A small, strong watch-tower, built by the Turks some nine or ten years ago, stands here and there on a controlling ledge, but the soldiers who ought to be on duty in the pass appear to have been

drafted away from these humble forts, either to defend Suraya Pasha in Jerusalem, or to swell the battalions launched in pursuit of Akeel Aga. Every mile of the ascent becomes lonelier and more difficult. We pass a string of camels, an Arab and his son, a rabbi on a donkey; we meet a band of returning pilgrims; but as a rule, the glen climbing up from Modin toward Zion and Bethlehem, though it is at first lovely and full of flowers, grows strangely silent and impressive as we rise above the lower range of heights and begin to reach an elevation of two thousand or two thousand five hundred feet. Not a hamlet, not a house, not a mill, not a garden, is now seen. Some of the rounded hills look trim and terraced, as if for vines; on every knoll stands the ruin of a convent or a mosque; but the tropical vegetation of the plain near Ramleh and Modin has given place to a flora more homely and familiar to our eyes; a flora in which the holm-oak, arbutus, thorn, and holly, sweep you back in fancy to the mountains of Killarney and South Wales.

Turning in our saddles towards the west, we find that the sea is full in sight; the dear, domestic sea, with its happy surprise and delicious dream of home.

On the first great ridge of hill stands an Arab ruin, Beit Fejjôl; near to which, on our right, is Sâris, a tiny hamlet, with a well and garden. Crossing the chain a little above Sâris, we leave the Wady Aly and the lair of Disma in our rear, and, with our faces full in the sunshine, pick our way slowly and on foot down the side of a precipitous

valley, in the soft limestone stairs of which dropping road even our Arab mares cannot keep their feet. In front of us rise two peaks; to the right, Sôba; to the left, Beit Nakûbeh. Below, the valley spreads itself broad and open; a white track running through it like a stream; domes and mounds of earth rising round it, and appearing to inclose it in their arms. Half hidden in the shadow of the mountain, shines a bold and beautiful hamlet, strong, and of stone, the houses of which are large and well built, the grapes and figs abundant, with a mosque, a fountain, and the shell of a Gothic church. The village seems to be just waking into life. A camel is plodding along the road, a sheikh is kneeling at prayer on a house-top, a damsel is carrying water from a well. Yet this smiling hamlet, with its poetical Arab name of Kuryet el 'Enab—Village of Vines—and its softly tranquil aspect, is no other place than the mountain aërie of that infamous bandit, Abu Gosh.

In front of the church (a shell, still perfect, of Italian or Spanish Gothic, once a chapel of crusading kings, and now a cattle-shed and rope-walk for the bandits) lies a square inclosure of rude stones, in which grow a few aged trees. This is another of the roadside inns, at which the pilgrim sits for an hour, resting his horse, and eating his simple meal. Before Ishmael can spread a yard of carpet on the ground, Arab girls bring jars of water, and a sheikh comes down from the village to smoke a pipe of jebilé and demand a baksheesh, his tributary tip—

courtesies and gifts which a prudent pilgrim should not refuse. A dozen piastres will make you lord of this valley, for the sheikh is no longer a prince at the head of a thousand spears, making war on his neighbour and taking tribute from the Pasha of Jerusalem. The pride of Abu Gosh has been broken, and his name is now but a terror of the past. Yet, when you are riding through a wild ravine, where every man carries a gun, it is well to be at peace with the ruling sheikh.

While Ishmael lays the cloth and spreads the repast of hard eggs and chicken, of brown bread, oranges, and grapes, there is time for a stroll; so, just to stretch our limbs, we climb up the steep streets of the Village of Vines, admiring its luscious fruit, and cooling our temples in the shade of its Christian porch, thinking of the old, old story of the place now known to Arab peasants as the robbers' lair: remembering how, before the children of Jacob subdued the land, it was already a famous and sacred town—a town, not a hamlet, as its most ancient name implies, (Kirjath Baal, City of Baal, being a holy place of the immodest Canaanite god, which the Hebrews, when it fell to the lot of Judah, changed to Kirjath Jearim, City of Forests); how the six hundred Danites from Zorah and Eshtaol pitched their tents on this slope before going up to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, whence they stole the ephod, the teraphim, and the molten image, before setting out on their treacherous raid against Laish; how the ark of God, when fetched by the

despairing Israelites from Shiloh, and being taken from them in fight by the Philistines, was set up in the great temple of Dagon, at Ashdod, was sent away from Ashdod to Gath, from Gath to Ekron, from Ekron to Beth-Shemesh, and, on the prayer of the people of Beth-Shemesh, was brought up the hills and left on this mountain side in the care of Eleazar, son of Aminadab, for twenty years, until it was carried away by David to the holy hill.

That raid of the Danite band, so much like one of Abu Gosh's marauding forays, left its trace in the popular mind; and long after the men of Zorab and Eshtaol had settled down on the fields of Laish, the spot on which they had here pitched their temporary tents was known as Mahaneh-Dan, the camp of Dan. Three thousand years after the death of Micah, a similar cause produced a similar effect in the same valley; and the Village of Vines is now known to the wandering Arabs by no other name than that of the marauder, Abu Gosh.

Returning to our rude khan, and sitting down in the shadow of our tree, we find the eggs and fowls ready, and the grave young sheikh enjoying his pipe. Inviting him to share our meal, we fall on the bread and fowls; but, either from pride or modesty, he declines; though accepting a melon, a loaf of convent bread, and a little more tobacco. Giving the fragments of bread and fruit to the poor, taking a mouthful of cognac, with a last pull at the water-jar, we climb into the hot saddle, bidding the sheikh adieu; on which he mournfully waves his

hand, as if dreaming sadly of those days (a dozen years past) when no Frank could have ridden from that khan until his saddle-bags had been searched and perhaps lightened of their weight.

Passing a dry fountain in the hollow, we begin to ascend the steep. Sôba is everywhere in sight; a noble cone, of stupendous strength, crowned by a fort which Mohammed Ali destroyed, and Abu Gosh rebuilt. Crossing a higher ridge of the hill, having the ruins of Kûstûl, a Crusader's castle, possibly a Roman fort, on our right, we plunge down a steep and rocky pass into a dry ravine, in the bed of which, as it flows into the great Wady Beit Hanina, bloom a few small pleasure gardens, with a crop of delicious apples, grapes, and pomegranates; among which an Arab family boil and vend coffee, and supply red charcoal for the hookah and chibouque. These gardens have abundant water. Close to the road stand the ruins of a Christian church, only less strong and noble than the shell at Abu Gosh. A few strides further down the glen a Roman bridge spans a rivulet of stones, which in the rainy season may become a flood. On a high promontory, above the junction of two glens, and looking down into a productive bottom, perches the strong stone village of Kûlonieh, evidently Colonia, a Roman station. Signs of life now reappear; fellahs are seen building houses, women shaking olives, children running about the orchards; and the whole rich valley is alive and bright. On the space now covered by these gardens, walls, and ruins, that village of Emmaus, sixty

furlongs from Jerusalem, into which the Master walked with Cleophas and the disciples, is supposed to have stood. It is one of the loveliest spots in the hill country of Judea.

Ascending from this valley, you leave the fig trees and olive trees behind. The hills are still terraced for vines; but the aspect of nature grows yet more stern, and bare, and monotonous, as you climb up towards the high table land of Zion and Olivet. On your right, up a wild glen, shines the convent of Ain Karim, built on the spot where Elizabeth is said to have dwelt, and where John the Baptist, by some accounts, was born; a spring of water flowing at her door, and the face of her country being soft and green. Sôba and Neby Samuel still appear to rise above all the hills of Judah. The road goes zig-zag over the limestone rock, the waste and stones increasing as you approach the Holy City. Vegetation almost ceases; in a cleft you may find a bramble, and in some happy hollow you may descry an olive, but the rule is otherwise. Rock, white and blinding, rock broken into fragments, rock burnt into powder, stretches before you and behind. At length, when the long reach of wall, twining gloriously rugged and picturesque round the bases of cathedral, synagogue, and mosque, appears in sight, the eye clings fondly to the figure of a single palm, shooting gracefully up from a garden in the city near the Bethlehem gate; and on the right, in a deep natural trough, to an olive plantation, in the midst of which nestles

the Convent of the Cross. The aspect of the land is stern and desolate, and the great city itself seems to spring from the centre of a rolling plateau of stones and graves.

CHAPTER X.

The Hill Country.

To men who rise early and ride hard, who expect their dinner at noon, and enjoy their sleep at night, the hill country of Judah offers but a lenten bait. Clean sheets, old wine, and toothsome chicken, are things unknown to the sacred soil, and it is well, dear friend, that you should know it, so as not to waste time on the impossible—as in waiting for wings to grow and in crying for the moon. Judah is bare. Dreams of good eating should have been left behind, not in the plains merely, but beyond the sea. When you are about to leave Venice or Vienna for that Morning Land of which these two cities are the golden gates, it may be wise to learn by sharp self-scrutiny and trial, to what extent, if to any, your nature has become pledged to its corporal wants. Are you steel like a Brahmin, are you wax like a Sybarite? If on trial you should prove to be one of those men who must either eat, drink, and sleep, or else fret in spirit and fade in cheek, give up your dream of travelling in the Holy Land. Among these hills of Judah, where the bread is not always white, the grapes not always sweet, you would pine for the flesh-pots of Egypt and the vintages of France. Either the Albergo Europa, or the Erzherzog Karl,—with a morning skim over

the Lagoon, an afternoon prance through the Prater —with music in the piazza or the burg after dinner —is your congenial heaven. If, on such trial, you should find that nature is so strong, habit so weak, that you can live without sleep, then come as you list to either Cairo or Stamboul; to which the food and drink of the West can be brought to your table in boat and train. Should your palate prove to be king, tempt neither the sands of El Arish nor the convents of Judah; sit down under the palms of Usbeyah, and dream among the glories of Seraglio Point. But if you find that you can royally dismiss the rabble of appetites, shed them at once; ride up through the wastes into this high land of Judea; and at the gates of Jerusalem, choose for yourself a home in which you will dwell.

Shall it be with the Spanish friars of San Salvador on Mount Gareb, the Armenian monks of St. James on Mount Zion? Will you try the house of a regenerate Jew in Christian street? Or, turning your back on cell and chamber, will you encamp like a Bedaween, pitching your canvas on the slope of Mount Olivet? Each plan has its own virtue. Living in the city you will be hunted by rats and snakes, mosquitoes and fleas; on the hill-side you may be pilfered by the children of Abu Dis. Most men prefer enemies which they can see and fight. You will have been a lucky fellow, if on trying the city for a week, you do not fly from the mercies of civilization to the freedom of your Arab tent.

As we ride up towards the Bethlehem gate, the crowds of Jews and Greeks, Arabs and Armenians,

seem to be crazed as with the panic of sword and fire. Waves of excited men come billowing round our stirrups. Can we give them no news? Has not Ramleh been sacked? Are not the Anezi at Latrûn? Is there no movement at Abu Gosh? The people appear to be amazed at our having come up the wady without being robbed. Our luggage ought to have been rifled, our throats ought to have been cut. In truth, the robbery and death of the physician, a deed of violence which, being done near their own doors on the body of a man whom everybody knew by sight, was an event to kindle imaginations apt by nature and trained by custom to take fire.

A Syrian, be he Jew or Moslem, cannot help thinking of a Frank as of a being set apart; for does he not see in this pale face from the West a man of mysterious wealth and ascendency, one to whom pashas are polite, and of whom Bedaween sheikhs are afraid? The Frank may be a giaour, an effreet, a son of Shaitan; yet to him has been given (for God is great, and his ways are wonderful) money and steam, the power of the earth and the power of the air. He is rich, he is mighty—on the whole he is just. To him, says the Arab proverb, belong the word of command and the use of the stick.

A Syrian peasant would no more dream of returning a blow from a Frank than a soldier would dare to return a slap from a pasha. At Acre, I have seen an English middy slash through a crowd of Arabs, many of them armed, the boy shouting and hitting to his right and left in animal gaiety

and sport. On Mount Zion, I have seen a little German lad, a servant in a hospice, rush out of his door, and lay a stick on the backs of a dozen grown-up Jews, all of them with manly and some of them venerable beards. Indeed, the reverence which in the fancy of a Syrian clings to his white brother, is akin to that divinity which in the middle ages and in the language of poetry, hedged a king. But, if it is rare for a Frank to be assailed by an Arab, it is still more rare for him to lose his life. As a rule, the Frank carries so little coin, is so well armed, is so expert with his weapon, and so sure in his seat, that the boldest thieves are daunted by his confidence; for even when he is met in the desert, away from all succour, and at the mercy of a swarthy host, he will still show fight, and if forced into defence he will either maim a man for life, or injure a mare more precious than a man. Nor is this the end of it, as it would be of an ordinary fray. Whether a Frank gets the Bedaween's blood, or the Bedaween gets a Frank's purse, there is no way of hushing the matter up, and of covering the deed with a little sand. The consul worries his pasha, the pasha sends out his Bashi Bazouks, the Bashi Bazouks harry the tribes, and when they have tracked the offenders home to their black tents, the government lays so many fines, and seizes so many camels and horses, that the robbery of a Frank has of late years come to be a perilous and unprofitable game.

The physician's death is therefore a portent and a sign. The old bonds seem loosened. If such a man were not safe in the hill country, who could

believe himself safe? Would a consul protect a poor Jew? Would Suraya send out troops to avenge the death of a woodman, of a muleteer?

Other stories are afloat: of fires in Esdraelon, of robberies in Samaria, of bloodshed and revolt in Hebron. Black tents, it is alleged, can be seen from high roofs and from convent walls. The Taámra, a tribe of Bedaween holding the hill country from Bethlehem to the Dead Sea, are said to be astir. Bands of the Adouan and Salhaan Arabs are reported coming up the Wady Cedron; Suraya is said to have sent troops into the district round Hebron; the Nabulus road is stopped, even to camel-drivers and the mounted post; and no ordinary news has come in from Nazareth for a month. Only the poorest Arabs go about with their donkeys. Yakoub protests against pitching our tents beyond the city walls; but for once in his life he is forced to give way.

Though nothing appears to be changed in the usual aspects of Jerusalem, the Greek prior was right in saying that the Holy City might be described as being in a state of siege, for all these hill towns in Judea are governed by martial law.

How, indeed, could a city like Jerusalem exist, unless it were governed with the sword?

It is a garrison town, with an enemy always at the gate. Look out from the dome of this little mosque on Olivet:—you are dwelling on the skirt of a great wilderness, face to face with those wild hordes of the tent who have never yet been either broken into keeping rules, persuaded into growing

their own corn and lentils, or caught and confined within city walls. From this dome you may peer down into the blue depths of the Dead Sea, sweep along the Jordan valley and up the mountain lines of Moab; and you know that in the vast countries lying between the Jordan and the Euphrates, countries larger than France and Italy, no law is acknowledged in practice save that of the stealthy hand and the smiting sword. Time never was in which the men living in tents did not envy and hate the men living in towns; in which the wandering tribes did not bear up against the settlers in cities, spoiling their habitations, carrying away their corn, levying ransom on their heads. Many of these dwellers in tents, the Anezi, the Shammar, the Mowali, and the Salhaan tribes, are mounted, all of them are armed. In firing from the saddle they have few equals, in thrusting with the lance they have none. No king has ever counted their numbers; the Anezi alone make a nation; the Beni Sakkr are a mighty host; and the associates of their sheikhs declare that if summoned by their Holy Caliph to defend their faith against the giaours, they could send fifty thousand spears into the field. These formidable hosts may be described as at all times camping round Jerusalem and surging against its gates. The Adouan have an agent at Abu Dis, and the Taámra pitch their tents in the wadies near the walls on every side. Would the city be safe without a vigilant observance of martial law?

From our little camp on the Mount of Olives, pitched on the northern slope under the Church of

the Ascension, we ride through the hill country to Hebron and Bethel, to Ain Karim and Mar Saba, to Neby Samuel and Bethlehem, ever glad to come back to the holy mount, where we never tire of enjoying the beauty of its scenery and the coolness and freedom of our Arab tent.

CHAPTER XI.

Road to Hebron.

RIDING along the stony track above Solomon's Pools, on the main road from Ain Karim to Hebron and Egypt, we observe a cloud of dust rising in our front; a cloud of dust which appears to be in rapid and boisterous motion, parting and shining near the ground, as with the flashing of swords and spears. Are they soldiers, are they Arabs? Are they fighting or flying, drilling or playing? Yakoub is at fault; for the dust of their feet clouds high and thick above them, and only a glitter of steel comes fitfully through the haze. Pulling up our mares, we hold on by the path, each with one hand on the revolver, another tight on the rein, ready for events, in case we may have to defend our lives. In a moment they are on us—past us—heated and furious, smashing the rocks and shedding sparks from their hoofs; thirty or forty Bashi Bazouks, with sabres whirling and horses foaming; five or six empty saddles in their ranks; in the men's looks that fierce animal light which is said to fill a soldier's eyes in the agony of mortal strife. Yakoub shouts to them as they plunge along—who are they—whither are they flying—where is the foe? They neither check their speed nor answer to the call; driven on, it would seem, by an unseen dread. As we stand

up in our stirrups, gazing after them in their flight, they sink into a hollow near Bethlehem, the stony road covers them up from our sight, and we see them no more. Like a gust of wind through the glen, they came and they are gone.

What shall we do next? Is it right to push on to Hebron? Are the Bashi Bazouks whom we have just seen, reeling and broken from some fierce encounter, the troops whom Suraya Pasha had sent into the Hebron district to quell the Arab population? If so, and Yakoub has no doubt of it, a retreating mob of light horse, with half a dozen empty saddles, does not answer very strongly for his success. The Maronite looks pale, and even Saïd's black face wears a waxen tinge. But where is Ishmael of the piastres, now increased to a score? At Ain Karim we put the imp on a donkey, and now, while we are gazing after the Bashi Bazouks, he slips away, and getting half a mile in advance, and being deaf to all cries and shouts, he manages, like a wayward child in a wood, to govern our adventures, and lead us whither he will.

On the hill-top beyond Etam, we ride into the field of battle, and pull up our horses among the dying and the dead. These are but two in all; two youthful Bedaween, in their coarse grey shirts and leathern girdles, with bright shawls and fillets round their brows, and two or three gaudy pistols lying near them on the ground. One poor fellow has a slit across his throat, the wound jobbed and gashed, not delicately cut; the youth is dead as the dust among which he lies. His companion, having a ball

in his chest, is bleeding rapidly away. By their garb they are evidently sheikhs; but their game of life is over; and whatever may have been the stake for which they played, they have thrown and lost. Traces of a sharp, short struggle, lie about in the road: some bits of rope, some wadding, a pistol, a broken lance, and pieces of splintered rock. Scarcely have we time to observe these signs of the past onset, when a swarm of horsemen, capped with gay shawls, brandishing long lances, sweep around us, eager and electric as a summer cloud. A few sentences from Yakoub and Ishmael tell them who we are: an English prince, a cousin of the Great Queen, a friend of Arabs and Mussulmans, going up to Hebron, into the country of the great sheikh, to see the cave of Machpelah and recite a prayer beneath Abraham's oak. Saluting the sheikh, a fine old fellow, with a grizzly, not an ample beard, I desire that between the English and the Bedaween there shall be peace in the future, as there has been peace in the past. At the name of England, the sheikh bows his head, in token of peace, and turns to his nephew, the dying man.

Some who are bending above the youth appear to catch what he says; but his words are few; and while the life is ebbing fast from his heart, the old sheikh sits bolt upright in his saddle, silent and stern, with an awful fire in his Arab eyes. When the ebb is past and the suffering has ceased, he whispers a few commands; two horses are brought round to where the bodies lie; the dead sheikhs are laid across them, and their venerable uncle accepts

from his servant a lighted pipe. All being ready to move, the old man bids us join his party, and proceed to the oak of Abraham in his train.

From this aged sheikh, who remembers with a bitter rage the wars of Mohammed Ali in Syria, when the Arab camps were broken up, the flocks devoured by strangers, and the black tents driven away beyond Jordan into the great Desert, I learn many things; among others, that the Saxon and the Arab are brethren, and that the English are white Moslems of a Western sect. On these two points, the sheikh is beyond reach of evidence. Who is the Arab's best friend? Who are the Caliph's firm allies? When the Latin Christians came into the Lebanon, who sent out fire-ships and chased them away? When the Greek Christians crossed over the Danube on their way to Stamboul, who beat them back into the ice and snow? When Ibrahim Pasha was at Acre, beating the Shammar and Anezi into the Euphrates, who cannonaded the Egyptian out of Syria? Who permitted the Shammar and Anezi to return? When Bonaparte and the Franks came into Palestine, taking their best lands from the tribes, who fought against the Franks and drove them into Egypt and the sea? Always the same English Arabs, always the same white Moslems of the west.

From him, too, we hear the whole story of Suraya's attempt to cow the Esau spirit now glowing in southern Judea; the high seat of which is at Hebron, a holy place in the opinion of both the Moslem and the Jew.

The Arabs of this wild and difficult country,

while bowing to the Sultan as their spiritual lord, pay as little respect to his temporal rights as the Italians of Genoa do to those of their Pope. For the most part, they are a pastoral people dwelling in tents, driving their camels and goats, their asses and kine, from wady to wady in search of food; living like their foregoers Abraham and Lot in the same country, with their children, their kinsmen, and their slaves in tents; and owning no masters under heaven, except disease and death. Of the great Sultan in Stamboul, they have only a faint and vague idea; a ghostly and spiritual, rather than a mortal dread. When an imperial hatt, or edict, is promulgated in the Caliph's name, they hold themselves free to obey it or reject it, as they please; for the spirit which inspires the edict is too far off for their comprehension, while the voice which commands its execution is only that of Suraya, an intruder and an alien in their land.

A very unpopular hatt had been sent down from Jerusalem to Hebron, for the instant levy of a number of men, for the new Sultan, Abdul Aziz, being a soldier, a statesman, a patriot, a man of large views and of masculine energies, had resolved, amongst other reforms of the seraglio and the state, on raising his army to a high degree of excellence and strength. From Belgrade to Bagdad, every town, every province of the empire, had been commanded to raise its quota of men by a given day; among the rest, the Pashalic of Saida, including the whole province of Palestine. Now, the Bedaween, having never yet been broken into the habit of

either living in his own house, or cultivating his own field, has an elfish dislike to drilling and marching, to staying in one place, to keeping regular hours, and to obeying the word of command. He is a wild man, to whom a city is a prison, a companion a spy. So, when the hatt came from Stamboul to Jerusalem to raise troops, and Suraya sent it down to Hebron and other quarters, the Bedaween sheikhs received it in silence, and laid it aside, saying their sons should not serve and their horses should not be seized. At the first roll of the drum, the young men fled into the wilderness. Below the town, on the green slope near the great pools of Hebron, stood the Sultan's white tents; above which the red banner drooped, and the silver crescent sparkled; but the sheikhs having set their faces against this levy, none of their young men joined the standard, and the Caliph's tribute of heroes remained unpaid.

What could Suraya do? Abdul Aziz, who commenced his reign by putting away the odalisques of his hareem, by burning down his seraglio, by exchanging his crown jewels for ships of war, was not a master to be baulked of his due. Those who know the new Caliph say that his will is strong, that his hand is prompt, that day and night he dreams of war, his only music being a rolling drum, his chief delight in reviewing troops. Was such a prince likely to go without his share of Arabs, and permit the servant who failed him in duty to live and thrive? In the midst of Suraya's troubles, came the bad news from Galilee, telling him of the revolt of Akeel Aga, and the disturbances near Nazareth.

Thinking it became him to act with vigour, lest a local disturbance in Galilee should grow into an Arab rising, and finding that my aged but not venerable friend had been one of the busiest in resisting the royal hatt, Suraya despatched a company of Bashi Bazouks, instructed to ride swiftly and secretly to their post; to suffer no man to pass them on the road; to come upon the black tents in the night; to invite the sheikh, together with his sons and nephews, to a parley at the Serai; to use violence only in the last resort; but in any case, freely or by force, to bring the sheikhs to Suraya's residence on the Temple hill. A part of their work had been promptly done. Surrounded in the night, surprised by a message which he could neither evade nor resist, the old Arab had thought it best to obey cheerily, as though he suspected no evil and went along of his own good-will. He asked the captain on duty for his pass. When a Bedouin sheikh is called up from the country into a garrison town, it is usual for the Pasha to send him a safe-conduct, which, for the Arab's satisfaction, is commonly signed by a foreign consul or the prior of a convent; the signature of an English agent being the one most eagerly sought and most thoroughly esteemed. The officer had only Suraya's pass to show; a circumstance highly suspicious in the Arab's eyes; but seeing himself hemmed round by troops, unable either to escape or to resist, the old man pretended that the pass was enough to assure him of the Pasha's good faith.

The sheikhs were allowed to keep their arms,

and to ride their own mares; they were only asked to make haste. So soon as they were mounted the horsemen closed around them, as an escort or a guard, and while the darkness of night still hung over the tents, the company wheeled round some houses and gardens and began their march towards Jerusalem, which city they might have reasonably hoped to reach about noon. Some dogs, awakened by the clatter of hoofs on the road, set up a cry, in which other dogs joined them, until the whole country seemed to be rousing itself into a dismal howl. The sheikhs took heart at the sound, for they knew that the Arab camps would soon be astir; that news of their seizure would spread; that their friends would muster and give chase. To gain a little time was to gain a fair chance of rescue. A jerk of the rein brought the old man's horse to its knees, and the cavalcade to a pause. A few moments were gained; but the Bashi Bazouks, seeing that the stumble was a feint to gain time, drew closer round the sheikhs, whom they now began to treat as prisoners rather than as guests.

Arabs, though they ride fast and well, take a long while to muster, and the sheikhs, though as well armed and mounted as the Bashi Bazouks, pay them the compliment of seldom assailing them under an advantage of ten to one; but in the bottom of a deep glen, called the Wady Ariub, among fragments of rock and stones, the troops were suddenly beset by a cloud of men in the dark night, when their loose line was broken, and before they could rally and form, the enemy was gone. Not a shot had

been fired, not a thrust had been made. Eight or ten men had been rolled over by the shock, but no bones had been broken in the fray. When they had again fallen into line, to resume their march, three saddles were found empty, and three of their five prisoners had disappeared. Hopeless of recovering their lost sheikhs, and certain that the Bedaween would return on finding that in the darkness and confusion of the night they had left two of their sheikhs and three of their mares behind, the Bashi Bazouks, drawing their swords and closing their ranks, rode faster and faster as the day began to dawn. The Arab youths, now hugged in their midst, felt sure of the doom awaiting them in Jerusalem; the resistance and the rescue adding heavy weight to their previous sins; and they attempted, once too often, to arrest the pace at which they were being hurried to a shameful end. Then, a little above Etam, on the wild and lonely hill-top, had occurred a sharp and sanguinary deed—a throat had been jobbed through with steel, a bosom had been pierced with lead, and two swarthy young Bedaween had been tumbled from their saddles into the Hebron road.

CHAPTER XII.

Bethlehem.

RETURNING from Hebron by the way of Solomon's Pools, we rest for a while at the Latin convent near Bethlehem; an hospice which has replaced in that village the more ancient Hebrew khan.

From the guest-room of this convent you look out upon the ridge and shoulder of the hill on which Ephrath, which is Bethlehem, stands. This hill holds no high place among the hills of Judah; it is, in fact, narrow and depressed. Gedor, Gibeah, and Mar Elias, close it round on every side—save only that which falls away into the Wady Cedron, towards the deep chasm of the Dead Sea. The Mount of Paradise looks down upon it from the south, and Neby Samuel soars above it to the north. From all these prouder and more lonely heights, the eye can sweep, either, on one hand, down to the Jordan banks, or on the other hand, across the plain of Sharon, past Gath and Lydda, into the lustrous bays of Ascalon and Joppa. Bethlehem has no such range to boast. On every side but one, some peak or spur obstructs the view: Mar Elias and the Greek convent on its crest hiding the one view which every eye most seeks—the road to Zion and the Mount of Olives. A string of gardens, a few steep fields, much crossing of white

roads, so many that the point of junction may be called the Place of Paths, a glen which drops by leaps and steps to the great Cedron valley, make the landscape. Yet the slope which is thus bound in by higher tops and more barren crests has a winning beauty of its own, a joyous promise of bread and fruit, which puts it first among the chosen places of Judea. Nor can it be truly said that all this beauty is borrowed from either the pastorals of Rachel, Ruth, and David, or from the epical events of that night when the shepherds in yon fields were startled by hearing the angelic psalm. Some part of the attraction springs, no doubt, from holy associations, from that abiding poetry on which our youth is fed. Who, in truth, could gaze unmoved upon the fields in which Boaz reaped his corn, the slopes on which David kept his sheep, the road along which the Virgin and her husband toiled, the country in which the shepherds held their watch by night? But even to those who came to Ephrath in the earliest times, like Jacob on his way from Bethel, like Saul on going down to Engedi, this lovely and fruitful slope, with its springs of sweet water and its ample rows of oak, must have offered an abiding charm.

Facing to the south and east, its gardens glow in the heat of noon, and its white stone houses seem ablaze with light. The vines, the fig trees, and the olive trees, love the soil, the grapes have a strong, sweet pulp, of an aromatic taste; and the green figs of Bethlehem have a flavour which they who have eaten them will remember as an Egyptian is said to

recollect the Nile. A dark ruddy loam, which the Arab tillers call the Good Earth, lies bright in the clefts and furrows of the rocks, ready to receive, and spongy to retain, the quickening autumnal shower. From the fact of fields being rare in this sterile zone, yon few grey patches sinking off towards the wilderness and the Mount of Paradise, give a character, that of corn-land, to the country side, as well as an auspicious name to the sacred town. The old word, Ephrath, meant Place of Fruit; the newer word, Bethlehem, means House of Bread: one following on the other, as barley and maize come after grapes and figs, and the sower of grain succeeds to the breeder of goats and kine. The little bit of plain through which Ruth gleaned after the young men, together with a level of stony ground here and there in the glen towards Mar Saba, are the only corn-lands occurring in the hill country of Judea for many a league. Thus it happened that the city which grew up beside these fields and enjoyed their produce, came to be known among the roving tribes of Palestine, first as the Place of Fruit, and afterwards, when the land was settled and the seed trampled into the ground, as the House of Bread. These ruts and tracks over the hill country, though white and scorched by the desert sun, are not, in their caves and orchards, without many a nook of pleasant and welcome shade. In short, in the one word which to a Syrian ear would express every beauty and grace of heaven, the hill of Bethlehem, in this torrid clime, in the midst of these arid wastes, is almost *green*.

On the south front of this teeming slope, looking over to the Shepherds' Tower, with the hot wilderness and the Dead Sea below, stand, as they stood in the days when Samuel came up from Gilgal to choose a king from among the tribe of Judah, groups and clusters of white cubes, called houses, ranged on the sides of a long, narrow street or lane, which, starting from the ridge, and jerking and twisting down the hill for about half a mile, sends off court and alley to the right and left, not into fields or into other streets and lanes, but, by bends and turns, up to garden-gates and door-ways, and to stone huts and caves in the rock.

This lovely green ridge of Bethlehem is the scenery of some of our most tender and gracious poems: the idyls of Rachel, of Ruth, of Saul, of David, of Chimham, of Jeremiah, of the Virgin-mother; the subjects of these poems being the foremost passages in Israel's religious life.

The first of these Hebrew idyls is the death of Rachel. The tale is so ancient that it carries you back to a time when, as yet, the Hebrews were not, and Bethlehem was not. The green ridge of hill, with its avenues of oak, its gardens of grapes and olives, was then a possession of the Canaanites, in whose idiom it was called Ephrath, the Place of Fruit. The Jebusites held the neighbouring rock of Zion; and sheikhs from beyond Jordan pitched their black tents around its springs, and lodged their cattle in its caves. Jacob, one of these sheikhs, a man who had been dwelling in the Hauran, the country of his uncle Laban, where he had served

fourteen years for his two wives, Leah and Rachel, was journeying along this stony track from Bethel, he and his wives and their little ones, his man-servants and maid-servants, a great host, with a train of camels, a herd of ewes and rams, a flock of steers and milch kine, and multitudes of goats. The sheikh was going up to Hebron, where Isaac, his father, dwelt. But Rachel, his younger and more beloved wife, then great with child for the second time, fainted with the pangs of motherhood as the camels drooped down the sharp ridge of Mar Elias into the green country; and the throes of birth coming fast upon her, she died as her son, whom she called Benoni, child of her sorrow, and her husband called Benjamin, son of his right hand, was being born into the world.

"And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem: and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave." The death of Rachel, the dearly-loved wife, the typical mother of Israel, lent an abiding poetry to Bethlehem; consecrating, as it were, the soil of Ephrath to the royal line; her burial on the green ridge, in the shade of fig trees and olives, making the spot holy for ever in the eyes of all her race.

Three thousand five hundred years have elapsed since Jacob set up the pillar above Rachel's grave; but the memorial stones are still here, protected by Moslem piety; a Saracenic dome covering that which in the eyes of every Jew is the most sacred dust in the Holy Land.

The second idyl is that of Ruth. The Book of

Ruth presents a picture of the place in which the uncrowned line of Judah had come to dwell. It is a stony country, with its green ascent discernible from afar by the huge fig trees, and by the white pillar set up over Rachel's grave. The plain between Ephrath and the Mount of Paradise standing on the very border of the Desert, the springs are few, though the waters which well from them are pure and sweet. A year of dearth—a thing not rare either then or now in Judea—will drain the wells and consume the verdure to its roots. Four or five years of scanty rain suffice to bring famine into the land. It was such a dearth that had sent Abraham from Bethel down into Egypt, that had driven Isaac into the plain of Gerar, that had caused the ten sons of Jacob to repair to their brother whom they had sold into bondage:—and so it had happened once again in the days of the Judges, in the generation of Boaz the son of Salmon, that there came a long drought on the hill-sides of Judah, and the corn-fields of the Plain below the town, and of the wadies near it, were parched and dry. Now, as Isaac, when he was pinched for food, had gone down into the low lands of Gerar towards the sea-shore, so Elimelech the Bethlehemite, a kinsman of Boaz, had looked out, in this new day of scarcity, from the city in which there was no bread, towards the abounding fields of Moab, the mountains of which country he could see from the house-top. That land of plenty was the land of his fathers; and there he might hope to eat and live. So, taking with him Naomi, his wife, with Mahlon

and Chilion, his two sons, he had passed out from Ephrath, through the wilderness, going beyond the Dead Sea into Moab, where he had dwelt until he died. His two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, taking wives, Orpah and Ruth, from the women of that country, had dwelt there until they also died. Then Naomi rose up, and, hearing news that the Lord had visited her people with rain, and had given them bread once more, said she would now return to her own city. Orpah, the widow of Chilion, kissed her and went back; but Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, clave to Naomi and would not leave her, saying, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." And so, in the early spring days, when even the Desert hills are alive with the green of herbs and shrubs, the two women who were to renew the blood of Judah, and in whose posterity the whole earth was to be one day blessed, came up from Moab, through the ways of the wilderness, to a city which knew them not. Is this Naomi? The woman was proud and wretched, and she answered her questioners in wrath. But Ruth, the Moabitish damsel at her side, was soft and comely, of a tenderness and a beauty strange among the Hebrews. Perhaps she was fair, like her descendant David, who had light eyes and a rosy cheek; and like Solomon, his son, whose skin is said to have been ruddy and white, and his eyes like doves' eyes washed with milk. By the law of Moses, Ruth could have

claimed that her husband's next of kin should receive her and take her home to be his wife; but being gentle and good as she was comely, she would not force him to do her right. When April was come, and the barley harvest ripe for the sickle, the fair woman went down into yon fields of the plain by the Shepherds' Tower to glean after the reapers, trusting in the Lord. Boaz, who was Mahlon's uncle, though not his next of kin, coming down from his house at Bethlehem into the fields, which were his own, said to his servants, as a sheikh going down to the harvest would say to his men even now, "The Lord be with you;" and the reapers answered him, "The Lord bless thee."

When Boaz saw his kinswoman in the field among the reapers, he spoke softly to her, bidding her glean after his men, and keep by the side of his maidens; inviting her, when she was thirsty, to go up to the pitchers and drink of the water which his people had drawn for their own use; not being afraid, as he should command his servants not to molest her, or to put any shame upon her. At meal-times he bade her come into the shady place, where the reapers sat with him at meals, and there eat of the bread and the parched corn, and dip her morsel into the vinegar set before them. It was the dawn of a new love in the old man's heart.

When the barley harvest was gone by, and even the wheat harvest had been garnered in, as Boaz slept in the threshing-floor, Ruth, by the counsel of her mother-in-law, Naomi, threw herself upon her kinsman's grace. The old man's soul was touched,

for he knew what the law commanded him to do —him after the next of kin—and he loved the fair stranger who had left behind her in Moab her country and her gods. So, when it was day, he went up from his house to the city-gate, and, sitting down in the shade of the arch, called to him the ten elders of Bethlehem and the man who was Mahlon's next of kin, and bade them declare before all the people that which the law commanded them to do for Ruth. The man who was her next of kin refused to perform a kinsman's part to the strange woman; so they plucked off his shoe in the city-gate, and Boaz bought up the inheritance of Mahlon in Ephrath, including his field and his widow; and, taking Ruth home to his house, she became his wife, a second Rachel, and the mother of a line of kings.

Then, after three generations had passed away, came the episode of Saul. When the people rose up and clamoured for a king to reign over them, Samuel, a Bethlehemite by blood, choosing for them Saul, the son of Kish, anointed him with holy oil, and bade him repair to Rachel's sepulchre, where —if his kingship were accepted by the Lord— he would meet two men who were to tell him that the asses were found, and that his father, Kish, was in trouble for his lost son. Saul went down to the tomb of Rachel, near which he received the first confirmation of his Divine call to reign over Israel.

A little later, in the same succession, came the more beautiful idyl of David.

Jesse (the son of Obed, the son of Ruth) was

an old man, a very old man, when David was born to him. David was the last of Jesse's ten sons, of whom Eliab, the eldest born, was already a man of mature age. From these grown brothers, who were tall and comely, with the strength of giants, like the young men of Bethlehem, the boy, who was small of stature and fair of face, having red hair and light eyes, like many of the youths and girls to be seen in these streets of Bethlehem even now, won little of a brother's love. In the East, a slave, a woman, and a youth are on a par, and are equally despised. They set the boy to do a bondman's work; to tend goats and asses; to wander, at the tail of a flock of sheep, over yon fields and ridges by the Shepherds' Tower; but David had the grace to turn the slave's office into use and beauty. Left to his own will, with his sheep to mind and protect, he learned how to sling stones, to run after the wolf and its prey, to wrestle with the leopard and the ounce, to drive back the Arab robber to his lair. He learned, too, on the hill-side, to bear hunger and thirst, to endure heat by day and frost by night. He grew familiar with every cave and glen, with every spring and well, between Mar Elias and Engedi. More than all, for his fame and power, he learned how to make lutes and harps, how to play deftly on stringed instruments, how to set his sorrows and his joys to music. Some of his sweetest Psalms come forth from these hills, and breathe the spirit of the savage wady and of the silent night. Like the wild country in which he dwelt, his verse appears to be peopled by the ox and the ass, the

hind and the calf, by the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea. In its tunes may be heard the roar of the lion, the yelp of the pard. It tells of the pit dug as a snare in the Desert, and of the man who had dug it falling into that snare. It sparkles with the glory of night, with the flush of dawn, with the light of the morning star. In the poetry of the Psalms, this tending on sheep, this doing of a slave's duties, is exalted into a type of the Divine rule: "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in pastures of new grass; he leadeth me beside the waters which are stilled."

When Samuel came up from Gilgal to choose a king in the place of Saul, who had offended God by his disobedience, Jesse and his sons were at a feast; all except David, who was out in the fields with his sheep. But the prophet sending for him to the house, the Lord chose him for king of Israel, and the messenger anointed him with the holy oil.

On David being brought, as a cunning harper, into the King's house, that he might play upon the harp and drive away the Evil Spirit, the King's son Jonathan, and the King's daughter Michal, saw him and loved him; but Saul was mad, and in his madness he struck his spear at the minstrel, who, by help of his wife Michal, had to let himself down over the city wall in a creel, and go up thence to the abode of the prophet in Ramah, perhaps yon height of Neby Samuel which we see on the north, above the line of Mar Elias. From that day, until the King died, David was a fugitive in these hills about Bethlehem; now dwelling in the Cave of

Adullam, near the Mount of Paradise; now in the passes of Engedi, near the shores of the Dead Sea. The aged Jesse, no longer safe in Judea, went over the Salt Sea into Moab, into the land of his grandmother Ruth. David was hunted like a slave and an outlaw; now dropping down cliffs, now hiding in caves; once cutting off the skirt of his pursuer's robe, another time carrying away the cruse of water and the royal spear. Every stone about Bethlehem seems to whisper of his adventures and escapes.

Even after the fair youth had become King of Israel, his connection with Bethlehem did not cease. The town became known as the City of David. The companions of his watchings and his wanderings were made his captains of the host, his members of the Thirty and the Three. Those who had gathered round him in the Cave of Adullam were his heroes and his mighty men. The fields which had belonged to Boaz the Sheikh remained the fields of David the King; and the house in which Ruth had lived continued in his possession, until he gave it away in his affectionate old age to one whom he loved as dearly as a son.

CHAPTER XIII.

The House of Chimham.

THE next idyl of which Bethlehem was the scene, is that of Chimham.

The story of how the home of Ruth and David came to pass from the royal line into a stranger's hands is a part of the sad history of the Psalmist's heart.

At the time when the King fled on foot over the brook Cedron and the Mount of Olives, from the threats of his rebellious son Absalom, he found shelter, he and the crowd flying with him, in Mahanaim, a strong city beyond Jordan, in the territory of Gad. There, three great sheikhs of the Eastern bank—one of them an old man, a stranger to David—brought into Mahanaim mats, and flagons, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, also honey and butter, and the flesh of sheep, and the cheese of kine, for the King and the King's followers. David was overcome by a kindness which his own children had not shown him. This aged, unknown stranger was Barzillai, the Gileadite: and David never forgot either him or his. When Absalom fell and the King was returning to his palace on Mount Zion, David spoke to the old sheikh, saying: "Come thou with me to Jerusalem, and

dwell with me, and eat at my table." But the Gileadite answered him: "I am this day fourscore years old. Can thy servant taste any more what I eat or drink; can I hear any more the voices of singing men and singing women? Wherefore then should I be a burden unto my lord the King? Let thy servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant, Chimham; let him go over with my lord the King."

And so it came to pass that Chimham, son of Barzillai, crossed over from beyond Jordan with the King, and riding up with him from Gilgal by the Wady Cedron to Mount Zion, dwelt in the palace like one of his sons. For David loved the young sheikh, and gave him food from his table and a house from his patrimony in Bethlehem. On his dying bed, remembering the Gileadite, he entreated his son Solomon that he would be kind to Chimham, and continue to rank him among those who ate from the same dish with himself. He was to stand among the household, favoured among the few, a brother, a companion of the great King, rather than a stranger and a guest in his place. The gift which Chimham received from the King's bounty continued for many generations to bear his name.

Five hundred years flow by, and Bethlehem becomes the scene of a new idyl, the story of which centres about the home of Ruth, now come to be called by the natives the House of Chimham—the idyl of Jeremiah, when the last band of Israelites

turned their faces against the Lord, refusing to hear his prophet and to obey his law.

A host of fugitives, soldiers and husbandmen, nobles and priests, with their flocks and herds, their servants and slaves, came hurrying along the road from Gibeon, chased by a phantom; men, women and children either seated on asses and camels, or trampling along the stony paths; flying they knew not whither from the wrath of King Nebuchadnezzar. They marched by the site of Jerusalem, where the temple was then a ruin, and the palaces of Zion were dust. They crossed the ridge of Mar Elias, taking their farewell glance of the sacred hill. But near the tomb of Rachel and the home of Ruth they paused and pitched their tents, that they might take counsel for the last time together, and inquire of the Lord what they should do, and which way they should wend in that day of misery and despair. Among the flying princes was Johanan, among the flying prophets Jeremiah.

A great crime had been committed in Judah, and the reign of David's house had closed in treachery and blood. In that middle stage from David to JESUS, long after Galilee and Samaria had fallen into the stranger's hands, and the ten tribes of Israel had been dispersed over Syria, Media, and the countries beyond the Tigris, these rocky fortresses of Benjamin and Judah had been also occupied by foreign troops, and the Holy City itself had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar, after a stormy siege. The conquerors, maddened by the long resistance, had levelled its walls, burnt its Temple,

and carried its people captive into Babylon. A remnant only had been left in the land, comprising the poor and the aged, who tilled the soil, and trained the vine, and who were wholly unused to arms. They had been left under the rule of Gedaliah and the ministry of Jeremiah; a remnant of the weak, the simple, and the helpless; not men who would be likely to rise upon their masters, yet strong enough to cultivate the earth, to continue the language, and to preserve the ancient law. They had gone back to their fields and vineyards, and garnered that year an abundance of corn and wine. After fixing their seat on Mizpeh, a height beyond Zion, and threshing the corn, they had been joined by many bands of their countrymen from Ammon and Moab; among others by Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, a prince of their royal line; a weak and turbulent man, unable to endure the government of Gedaliah, even over a remnant of farmers and shepherds. Ishmael entered into a plot with Baalis king of Ammon, to murder Gedaliah, and deliver the last remnant of Judah captive into his hands. Johanan, one of the few chiefs who had been left behind in Judea, perceiving these designs of Ishmael, reported them to Gedaliah; but the good man, pure in his own heart, could not be induced to suspect the young prince, and to take any steps in his own defence. When Johanan offered to kill Ishmael and save the people from a fatal crime, Gedaliah, treating him as a slanderer, sent him away. This lack of suspicion cost him his life. At a repast, as they were breaking bread together, Ishmael rose upon

Gedaliah, and putting him to the sword, had seized the town, the hareem, with the eunuchs and the king's daughters, the priests, the two prophets, Baruch and Jeremiah, together with all the people who had been left alive in Mizpeh, and would have carried them away captive into Ammon, into the court of Baalis, had not the watchful Johanan, hearing of the murder and capture, called in his bands and followed in pursuit. Overtaken by Johanan and deserted by his partizans, the wicked prince had fled into Ammon, leaving his captives, with the priests and the king's daughters, in Johanan's hands.

But Johanan had pursued these murderers, not from fear of God so much as from dread of the great king; and still fearing lest the rage of Nebuchadnezzar should be kindled anew against them on account of Ishmael's crime, he and his captains quitted Gibeon, where they had recovered the spoils of Mizpeh from the ravishers, and marching south, on their way towards Egypt, paused for a few days round the house of Chimham, the Bethlehem khan.

Johanan and his captains came into the khan to Jeremiah, calling upon him to pray for them to the Lord, that the God of their fathers would deign to guide them in the way, saying that whether they thought his counsels good or evil they would obey the Lord's commands. Then Jeremiah prayed for them during ten days, until the Voice came upon him, and then going out among the tents, he, in God's name, forbade the people to depart into

Egypt; saying—"Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you out of his hands."

Not with joy and rapture, as in the olden days, but with doubt and anger, the band of fugitives received this message from the Lord. They had given their pledge, but they would not redeem it. Much of the old faith of Israel had gone out from among them; they had learned to fear the king of Babylon more than the king of Heaven; and they rebelled in their heart before they had as yet renounced Jehovah by outward signs. Accusing the great prophet of deceit, of a design to yield them prisoners to Nebuchadnezzar, they rejected his message, and breaking up their camp at Bethlehem before the house of Chimham, they marched away through the plains into Egypt, carrying with them the curse of disobedience, and a threat that they should return to Judah no more, but should die in the strange land, perishing by famine, by pestilence, and by the sword. And so it came to pass; for neither Johanan nor the captains, neither Baruch nor Jeremiah, neither the eunuchs nor the king's daughters, saw the hills of Jerusalem any more.

Johanan and the captains being gone, the veil fell down over Bethlehem until the time for the last and greatest idyl—that glorious night when the shepherds of yon plain in which Ruth had gleaned and David sung, were roused by angelic voices singing hymns of joy at the Saviour's birth.

St. Luke, who was St. Peter's friend and companion, and who is thought to have heard the story

which he tells of his Master's birth from the lips of Mary in her old age, describes the scene as we may figure it even now. Joseph and his young wife, said to be fair and beautiful, like her ancestor David, and like the young girls of Bethlehem in the streets around us, were coming up from Nazareth in Galilee, to be taxed—that is, to be counted and inscribed — in their own tribe and in their own house. The girl fell sick. The khan was full of people; there was no room in the guest-chamber; but the throes of nature came upon her; and in the narrow cave, where the asses were stalled, the Saviour of mankind was born. In these fields below the inn, the shepherds were abroad, keeping watch over their flocks under the stars of heaven. The winter was in its depth, and the starry hosts were frosted into fire. But a figure gleamed upon these shepherds, which outshone the lights of heaven. It was the angel of the Lord, who spoke to them, saying, "Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy; for unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

And when the shepherds looked up they saw around the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Syrian Khans.

A SYRIAN inn, khan, caravan-serai, is not, and never was, an "inn," as we use this word in London, Sydney, and New York; a house in which you find good food and a clean bed, an obliging hostess, a cheery welcome, and a heavy bill. Such things are not of the East.

A Syrian khan is a fort and a mart; a refuge from thieves; a shelter from the heat and dust; a place where a man and his beast may lodge, where a trader may sell his wares, and a pilgrim may slake his thirst. In the most ancient days, before Abraham had yet led his sheep out of Hauran and pitched his tents in the plain of Moreh, the khan was a sheikh's house or tent, the best place in the town, the safest corner of the camp; for a chief having everywhere a right to plunder or protect the strangers who come among his tribe, no other house than his could receive a guest. Where in that old time there was no sheikh's house or tent in which to receive wayfarers, as might often be the case in desert roads and in lonely glens, there was still some rude sort of khan, caravan-serai, or inn, though it might be little more than a field or a small enclosure, set apart by the tribe as a camping-ground for such merchants and strangers as might chance to travel through their

land. The word khan (from the Persian) means a lodging for the night. When this lodging for the night could not be given in a sheikh's house or tent, on account of distance, a khan would be erected by Arab piety (as in alpine passes we Franks erect houses of refuge from snow and mist), nearly always near a spring or stream, and in the shade of a goodly tree or a group of trees; to wit, by the fountain of Elisha near Jericho, and under the Patriarch's oak at Hebron.

When the sons of Ishmael grew strong, and the merchandise passing through their land became rich, these open fields in which the merchant lay down under a tree, had to be either fenced with a ridge of prickly thorn, or covered from attack by a wall of stones. Such would appear to have been that khan by the wayside from Egypt into Canaan at which the brethren of Joseph slept that night when they found the money in their sacks and were sore afraid; such that other wayside khan at which Zipporah, the wife of Moses, moved by the Lord's anger, took up the sharp stone, and with her own hand circumcised her first-born son. This very rude sort of lodging for the night may be seen at this day in many parts of Syria: as at Bab el Wady near Latrûn, at Riha in the plains of the Dead Sea, and at Kirjath Jearim, now Abu Gosh. In each of these places the inn is at most a rough shed, perhaps only a small field, having a tree for shade, a heap of flints for protection, and a spring near by for drink. That of Kirjath Jearim is of the oldest type. The wall is of rough stones, piled up without art; there

is no gate or door by which to enter; no roof or awning stands over head, no shade is provided beyond the lacing leaves. A traveller, eager for his dinner of bread and grapes, for a draught of cold water, for an hour of rest, has to leap the fence. But being once within the square of stones, he is safe from the smiting of a fiery sun, from the trampling feet of camels, in some degree from the pilfering children of Abu Gosh.

From this rough refuge in the fields to such a khan as that of Bethlehem in the days of Jeremiah and to such caravan-serais as those which Haroun and Saladin built on the Syrian roads, the ascent was easy. Raise the rough wall; build it of blocks; cut a gate through the front; carry a duct into the centre; raise a trough and lay a pipe; set the fountain fizzing and flowing; throw a line of archways or lewans round the inner face of the wall; set a man to watch the gate; and you have provided all the conditions of a good Oriental khan. Such would seem to have been that edifice on Mount Ephraim in which Micah received the Danite spies. Such also was that home of Chimham in which Jeremiah prayed to the Lord, and to which Joseph brought his young wife from Nazareth to lodge.

An Oriental khan is usually built by a prince or sheikh, and from its great size must always be erected by a man of wealth. Among Moslem rulers, Haroun and Saladin are remembered and blessed as the greatest builders of khans, for in the piety of Eastern life the raising of a khan is considered a sacred deed, like the planting of a grove and the digging of a

well. In our own time, a khan like that of Cairo, like that of Beyrout, is more of a market than an inn, and in such cities it may be raised for the sake of lucre; but the fine old structures which adorned the great roads of commerce and travel between Jerusalem and Alexandria, between Damascus and Ptolemais, between Gadara and Sidon, were monuments of piety and pity, built by their founders without thought of gain, and were almost as sacred in character, as durable in material, as either a synagogue or a mosque. Even when the wars of race or religion swept the towns and villages from these roads, the khans were allowed by common consent to remain; being considered as a sort of holy property, like the springs and the wells, in which all mankind had an equal and a common right. The Babylonians spared the house of Chimham; the Greeks spared the khan of Joseph's Well; the Crusaders spared Khan Lebonah. What a hospital is in a modern war, a khan was in an ancient war: a secular building sanctified by its noble use. It was always an edifice set apart, even when it stood in the midst of a great city, having its own walls and gates, and its own set of rules. It was never built in a slight and temporary style of art; but when raised of stone, by one who felt pride in his work, it had the enduring character of an Eastern mekhemeh or a Western town-hall. A great sheikh having the right of hospitality and protection, the strength and beauty of his khan would always prove the best advertisements of his power.

In the better class of Syrian towns and hamlets,

even in the desert wastes when they lie in the routes of commerce, the khan is a large, solid, and durable edifice; some ruins of a khan near the road from Gilgal to Jerusalem, on a hot ridge that has no longer an ancient name to tell its story, cover as large a space as the foundations of a church. When built by a great sheikh like Barzillai, or a rich sultan like Saladin, it would have a high wall, an inner court, a range of arches or lewans, an open gallery round the four sides, as in one of Chaucer's inns, and in many cases a tower from which the watcher might descry the approach of marauding bands. On one side of the square, but outside the wall, there is often a huddle of sheds, set apart from the main edifice as stables for the asses and camels, the buffaloes and goats. In the centre of the khan springs a fountain of water, the first necessity of an Arab's life, and around the jets and troughs in which the limpid element streams, lies the gay and picturesque litter of the East. Camels wait to be unloaded, dogs quarrel for a bone. Bedaween from the desert, their red zannars choked with pistols, are at prayer. In the archways squat the merchants with their bales of goods; goods dazzling to the eye and dangerous to the purse; amber from the Baltic Sea, gold-work from Cairo, shawls from the Indian looms, spices from Arabia Felix, precious ointments wrung from the gardens of Moab. Half-naked men are cleansing their hands ere sitting down to eat. Here a barber is at work upon a shaven crown, there a fellah lies asleep in the shade. Many people pass in and out; the faint coming in to drink, the weary to repose,

the thrifty to buy and sell; but there is no hostess to cry Good day, and no cook to prepare the noontide meat. Each man has to carry his dinner and his bed; to litter his horse or camel; to dress his food, to draw his water, to light his fire, and to boil his mess of herbs. The archway in which he lays up his goods and spreads out his carpet being bare, he must bring with him his cruse and his pan, his jar and his dish, together with his bag of rice, his tinder-box, his taper, his coffee-cup, his brazier, and his cooking range. When he finds the khan crowded with pilgrims and travellers—as during the religious festivals, and at gatherings of the tribe for either peace or war—he may have to spread his quilt on the straw, happy in his simplicity and fatigue to enjoy the lodgings of his camel and his ass.

It is only in recent times, since the opening of Greek and Latin convents throughout the Holy Land, that the native khans have declined in importance and in number. The monks from Italy and Spain, from Greece and Anatolia, though they may appear neither clean nor comely to an English eye, can offer you a bed for the night and a shelter from the Bedaween lance. Lodging with them, your cell may be dirty, your food will be coarse; but their roof is high, their court-yard is cool, and their gate is barred. At least, you can lie down in peace: your shoes shaken off from your feet; your zannar unwound; your arms of defence slung up to the convent wall. Your beast, too, can be housed and fed. It seems but little; though to a weary traveller, who

has worn off the strangeness and romance of life in a tent, it is a good deal to be able to lay down his revolver, and fall into sleep without a fear of being roused in the dead of night by either a jackal's howl or a Bedaween's grip.

When the caravan-serais were left to the trader and the Arab only, they fell away; some of them crumbling into dust; yet many of them have outlived the churches, synagogues, and mosques. Sometimes the wall of a khan is the only monument of man's art to be found in a morning ride. A ruin, or even a memory, of one of these old resting-places for the night, serves to keep alive among the Desert tribes some knowledge of the most ancient and famous sites; such as the inn of the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters on the Jordan, and the inn of Joseph's Well on the road to Cæsarea Philippi.

CHAPTER XV.

The Inn of Bethlehem.

A QUESTION may now be put:

Was this Inn of Bethlehem, near to which Christ was born in a cave, the same khan of Bethlehem around which the bands of Johanan ranged while Jeremiah prayed to the Lord for ten whole days?

Men who have lived in a tent, and journeyed along Syrian roads, noting the position of old khans, with the strength of their walls, and the extent of their accommodation for man and beast, will ask no proof for the assumption that there never could have been more than one public khan in a place like Bethlehem; always a small town, one of the least among the thousands of Judah; any more than they would require evidence that there had been more than one mekhemeh, more than one sheikh's house. These inns were built in stages, always at a distance one from another; about seven miles apart, like our old market-towns, an easy day's march on foot. Bethlehem, being the first stage on the great southern road, had an inn. About the same distance from Jerusalem on the eastern road, at the present fountain El Haud, lie the ruins of an inn. Midway from Jerusalem to Jericho—six or seven miles beyond El Haud—there was a second inn, a hospice on a wild ridge of hill, a half-way house, at which JESUS

must often have stopped to rest, and which he made the scene of his noblest parable. This was the usual rule in Syria. Khan Tumân was about eight miles distance from Aleppo; Khan el Mudeirej the same distance from Damascus. Khan Minyeh lay seven miles from Tiberias, on the Damascus road; Khan el Tujjar stood some furlongs farther on the Acre road. No case occurs, either in Hebrew or Moslem days, of two caravan-serais being open in the same village. Nor is it likely that where a Syrian inn had once existed it would ever have ceased to stand, until it became a ruin, a recollection, and a name. For not only was the khan a public edifice, with a strong frame, and much beauty of detail, but the very ground on which it stood, from being set apart for hospitable uses, would become in a certain sense holy—a site which was not to be disturbed for any common purpose. A church, a mosque, might be built on such ground without offending the public eye, as we see in the basilica at Bethlehem, and in the white mosque at Ramleh; but the ruins of a khan, long consecrated to hospitality—in the East a religious duty, almost a religious rite—would hardly ever be removed to make room for a meaner pile.

Thus, it appears safe to conclude that the inn of Joseph and Mary was the inn of Jeremiah; and if it were the inn of Jeremiah, it was also beyond doubt the house of Chimham; and consequently it was presumably the house which had once been that of David and of Ruth.

Every hint afforded by the Bible narrative as to local fact and local colour, helps to prove that the

birthplace of David was the birthplace of JESUS, and that the khan, or residence of Jesse, in which the two men were born, stood here in Bethlehem, on the very ridge now crowned by the basilica of St. Helena, the church of the Holy Nativity.

Boaz, we are told, was the sheikh of this town; the chief man, who had the right and duty of receiving strangers into his house. As such he would dwell, like the Arab lords on the Nile in our own day, beyond the town, at its entrance, on what may be called the guest-coming side. This side is seen in the old khan near Ramleh, where the pile stands out on the road towards Cairo; and in the still older khan near Bethany, where it is pushed out beyond the village towards Jericho and the Jordan. Jerusalem being taken as the bourne of all travel, the guest-house, in other words the sheikh's house, would be so arranged as to open on the country; thus, the first gate to which a wayfarer came, near a village, would be that of his host and protector for the night. Now at Bethlehem, as the shape of the ridge and its relation to Jerusalem imply, the spot on which the house of hospitality would stand must have been a little below the town, at the junction of roads coming up the great valleys from Tekoa, Jericho, Herodion, and Engedi; on a spot lying below the gates and above the fields; in fact, the very ground upon which the inn of JESUS stood, and on which the church and convent of the Grotto stand.

Here, then, where by all analogies we should seek it, the Bible tells us that the house of Boaz stood on the green slope, some paces below the town,

between the gates and the corn-fields. Ruth, living in the town with Naomi, had to go down into these fields, as the gleaners go down even now: "Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor;" the descent from the hill on which the city is built to the fields being sharp. Boaz, after his night adventure with Ruth among the sheaves of corn, is said to have gone up from his house to the city gate: "Then Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by." The sheikh's house was, therefore, below the town, and above the fields, on the slope of the hill. If the prior went up from his convent into the town to-day, his walk would be described in the very same words.

The house of Chimham, after Chimham had been made sheikh of Bethlehem and owner of the guest-house, answers like truth to the accounts which we read in the Book of Ruth. It is described as not in the town, but near to it. Jeremiah and the fugitives from Gibeon "dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem." By it, near it; not in it.

Is it not reasonably clear, then, that the inn in which JESUS was born was the patrimony of Boaz, the home of David?

That the spot once occupied by this khan is that now clothed with the basilica of the Holy Nativity is not less clear.

Justin Martyr and the Church traditions tell us that the Lord was born in a cave, which Justin says

was not in the village, but close to it. Caves abound in the wadies round about Bethlehem. It was in such a cave as the sacred grotto that David hid himself from the ire of Saul, and in another such cave that he cut away the skirt of the royal robe. These openings into the limestone rock are put to all kinds of service: at Siloam they are used for tombs; at Urtâs for houses; at Mar Saba for cells; more frequently they are used as shelter for the sheep and goats. In an hour's ride from the Church of the Nativity you may count a dozen such caves, in some of which people live, as in those of Urtâs, and in many of which it will be strange if you do not find an Arab and his flock.

Justin was born in Syria, and having travelled into Egypt, was familiar with the scenery and usages of Oriental life, both in the high country and in the flat. That a cave should be found at a khan; that this cave should be used as a stable; that when the khan was full of people the wayfarer might have to lodge for the night among the litter; would be to Justin Martyr facts as familiar as the sound of his own voice. Such a necessity as that of having to lie down in the same shed with the asses and camels must have occurred to him often, as it may occur even now to any man who roams about the East.

Evidence to the same effect is found in the church itself; the pile erected by St. Helena on the spot which Syrian tradition had then pointed out to her as the sacred spot. On such a point as the position of an ancient khan on a great public road, public knowledge could hardly have gone astray. A Syrian

khan, with the permanency of a mekhemeh or a mosque, has a fame much wider than a mekhemeh or a mosque. Justin knew the place, and no man acquainted with Palestine will easily believe that between the days of Justin and Helena the knowledge of a site so famous as the Khan of Bethlehem could have been lost. The death of Justin was separated from the birth of Helena by less than a hundred years. Is it likely that in so short a period the scene of Jeremiah's struggle with Johanan could be forgotten by the Jews — the scene of Christ's nativity by the Christians? Names last long in Palestine. We know from Holy Writ that the house of Chimham was called by his name five centuries after he had passed away.

Again, apart from its strange and memorable story, the Khan of Bethlehem was the most notable of all the caravan-serais in Judah; being the first stage on the journey into Egypt, the first night's rest after leaving Zion; the place where the camp had to be formed for the march, where the stragglers had to be called in, where the last kisses and adieus were given. It was the rallying point and starting point for all pilgrims and merchants going South. Such inns are not forgotten in a hundred years. Why, even in busy England, in changeful France, the memory of such a site would be kept alive for a longer time than divided Justin from Helena. Have we yet lost sight of the Three Pigeons at Brentford, of the inn at Ware, of the Tabard in the Old Kent Road?

The basilica being built, the spot would be fixed

for ever. No man has even doubted that the church of Helena is the same in site and substance with that now standing over the sacred cave. This venerable pile, the most ancient in the Christian world, is a silent witness that the Lord was born in a grotto of the rock; that this grotto in the rock was near a khan, and part of the khan. The cave is still here; a natural opening in the rock; a grotto hollowed out of the soft limestone, like a hundred others to be found within a dozen miles of the church. Take away this roof of English oak, remove this front of Syrian marble, and the grotto would have all the appearance of a common cave; its mouth opening towards the Shepherds' Tower and the fields of Ruth. As the shepherds came up the hill-side, they would be able to see the lamp burning in the entrance of the cave.

The tale told in the Gospel narrative is at one with itself and with the site: "She brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

CHAPTER XVI.

Carmel.

"It is always cool on Mount Carmel," says a Syrian hajjee, toiling in the afternoon heat along the Plains of Esdraelon towards the sea. "Cool as Mount Carmel," is a proverb in Galilee; one which we shall soon be in a position to test, the convent on its brow being full in sight. Plodding through the lines of a Turkish camp, threading the brisk little streets of Haifa; bobbing under a forest of olive trees, ambling over a plain which divides the mountain from the sea, we reach the foot of a steep stair, cut in the rock, more than a mile in height. A course of trotting round the dome of St. Paul's, of racing up the steps of the Ara Cœli, would be no bad training for this ascent to our Lady of Carmel's nest in the clouds. A rude cross stuck into the stony soil, points out to the pilgrim where it is proper for him to rest his feet and count his beads. Here and there a roadside chapel tells him when he should make a longer pause and recite a holy text. All the way up these ramps and ledges the ground is broken, and patches of the protecting wall have slid into the abyss. It is not a safe road to ride down after dinner in the dark.

A smart tap of the whip, a free dig of the spur, bring us merry and warm to the convent gate, where

we are noisily welcomed by a couple of friars and a score of dogs. Unlike the more gentle and chivalrous Alpine breed, these dogs of Carmel are taught to yelp and fight, to guard sheep and goats, to attack men, especially bronze men dressed in loose sacks and shawls. Bold as lions and fierce as wolves, these dogs appear to belong to that wild race of Esdraelon which tore Jezebel into shreds. They are tame only to the monks who train and feed them.

Lashing these curs aside, one of the friars conducts us into a refectory, where we eat with thankfulness a dinner of herbs and fowls, washed down our throats with a glass of sweet syrup and a little red Cyprus wine.

Dinner being done, grace duly said, we go with Father Cyrillo, a thin, dry Spaniard of La Mancha, who has lived and grown yellow in the East, to the convent roof, where we taste the salt sea breeze, and find that it is passing cool. The sun sinking in the waves; Haifa and Acre, with their white minarets and walls, and the bold loop of bay on which they stand, are all steeped in the purple shadows of the sea. From the chapel hard by, where the servants of our Lady are at vespers, floats the perfume flung about the altar, and the swell and cadence of the evening song. High up in this holy mountain, heaven and earth seem to kiss each other into peace.

But they only seem. The strong gates, the stern watch, the fierce dogs, suggest to a stranger other and less tranquil thoughts.

The convent of Elijah stands on a spur of the Carmel range, on the last wild bluff beetling above

the sea. Beyond its outer fence of wall, and starting from the ridge on which the convent stands, rolls high and inland a sea of mountain crests. Near to the chapel, a field is fenced and cultivated by the monks; below the wall lies a bit of garden; in the outer court grow a few olive trees, bending with fruit, though they are said to be older than the flood. A monk, who is also a cook, is providing a repast by shaking ripe berries from one of these aged trees. In the convent yard stands a flock of goats, black fellows, with grisly beards, brought in for the night, lest any stragglers from the Hanadi and Beni Sakkr camps should be prowling in the woods. Here they are safe, though Akeel Aga may be lord of yon hill and vale. Sitting on the house-top, behind walls and gates, and having the protection of a hundred dogs, one hears of these Bedaween braves with an even pulse; yet with spirits in a mood to make the growl of these watchers come not unwelcome to our aërie, even through the swell and cadence of an evening psalm. The hush of nature is so profound on this lonely height, that a bay from a dog disturbs the scene rather pleasantly, like the chirp of birds in a wood, and the roll of surf on a shore.

The Arab may be kept from the convent interior by gates and bars; but the whole force of Cabouli cannot keep him from infesting and ravaging the open plain. Now, as in the days of Gideon, the nomad is a robber and the black tent a curse.

Cabouli, Pasha of Saida, whose camp in the Valley of Nazareth we have just left, is one of the

great princes of Turkey; a poet, a scholar, a soldier; one of those new statesmen of Islam who play whist and read papers, and aim at being good Moslems in faith and practice, while they are perfect Franks in culture and in speech. Cabouli's French is copious; his familiarity with men and affairs in Europe large. He has lived in England, and knows the delight of a country house, including bright women, good dinners, and truthful speech. Put aside Layard, Rawlinson, and Strangford, men who have spent much of their lives in the East, who in England can be said to know more about Syria, Persia, and Arabia, than Cabouli knows about England, Germany, and France?

It may be added, in favour of men who, being parted from ourselves by barriers of race, of idiom, and of creed, are never likely to have more than justice done to them by Franks, that the habit of searching into our policy and manners is not confined to three or four men of rank and genius in the Ottoman Empire. Has any man ever met a Pasha of Belgrade in the living flesh? Having seen a bright and shrewd intelligence, a wary outlook into Western arts, in many an officer of inferior grade, I have come to fancy that the imaginary and amusing pasha must have vanished from the earth, like the Memlook and the Janizary, never to come back. In nearly every pasha, every bey, whom I have met in Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and the Islands, I have found a man of gentle manners, of fair information, of unfailing courtesy. Nearly all these men have spoken either French or English; some have added Russian

and German; few were ignorant of Greek. Yet none of these languages were native to their lips. They all knew Turkish, and most of them read Arabic and Persian, the languages of the Koran and Ferdousi. Do the best men in our service beat them much? A Turk has not ceased to be plump, and languid, and poetical, to smoke over-much, to love colour and pomp, to hold his head high in the world; but he has pretty well ceased to buy slaves and eunuchs, to pride himself on his ignorance, to contemn the rest of mankind as infidels and dogs. Cabouli Pasha is a Turk of this better school.

In Galilee he has a labour before him to test his virtue and to develop his power.

Unlike most of the Sinaitic and Nilotic Arabs—who keep to one district, jealously guarding their wells and pastures against intruding flocks—the tribes which people the great Syrian Desert, stretching from the Euphrates to the Jordan—the Anezi, the Mowali, the Shammar, the Beni Sakkr, the Salhaan—make a kind of circuit of the seasons, following the grass and herbs as they grow and wither, moving with their tents and hareems, their slaves and camels, and driving before them their goats and kine, in search of markets for cheese and flesh, and of pasturage free of cost. When they have stripped a valley of its herbage and drained the well of its water, they rove into another and another valley, eating up the grass on No-man's-land, and when that fails them, breaking into the fenced pieces and the open plains. They come like locusts, and so depart. Orchard, garden, meadow, pasture, vineyard,

every green patch of ground is the same to these hungry herds. In two or three days a peasant's whole substance is devoured; his house sacked, his field mown, his well emptied, his cattle stolen, his garner swept. Every year the harvests of Sharon, Shefelah, and Esdraelon, tempt these marauders from beyond Jordan, just as the harvests of Kent and Mercia used to bait the Saxon vikings and the Danish jarls. Every year sees the peasant fly from the face of his destroyer, leaving his garden unplanted, his field untilled, his tank uncleaned. The soil falls out of cultivation; thorns sprout among the orange trees and apple trees; dôm, cactus, and prickly pear, take the places of dates and figs. The luxurious plain becomes a desert.

But when the peasant is gone, and his hut has become a heap, his garden a brake, his well a puddle, the Arabs, finding no prey in that quarter, cease to go near it. Then the husbandman is tempted to return, to replant his orchard, to rebuild his house, until the green crops, the fruit trees, and the fresh water in the wells, shall again bring the Bedaween upon his labours, and the peasant, after struggling for a season to buy their good-will, relinquishes the spoil. From more than half the rich Plain of Esdraelon, the garden of Syria, the peasants have been driven by these Bedaween raids.

No government, not even that of Rome in imperial days, has ever been able to stop these inroads and prevent these depredations. Gideon checked them for a moment, and Ibrahim checked them for another moment; but, just as the Beni Kadem re-

turned to Esdraelon after Gideon, the Beni Sakkr returned after Ibrahim. How to drive back these nomadic races, confining them to the mountains and plains beyond Jordan, is a problem which has always occupied and always baffled the wit of civilized men.

From this convent-roof, you range over a mass of sea and sand, of wood and plain, of hill and city; over the landscape which spread its beauties before Elijah when he saw the cloud rise up from the sea; over that on which the Redeemer gazed when He crossed the ridge of Carmel, coming out of Samaria into Galilee after his conversation with the woman at Jacob's Well. At your feet fret the blue waves; here is the Arab town of Haifa; there, beyond the bay, lies Acre with its white walls, minarets and towers; above that city, to the north, stands the bold headland of Capo Blanco, a Syrian imitation of Dover cliff. Beyond that feature of the coast, unseen of the eye, never absent from the thought, lie buried in the sea and the sands, the palaces of Tyre and the ruins of Sarepta; that Tyre which Joshua described as the strong city, that Sarepta in which Elijah restored the widow's son; and on the site of Sidon itself, the mother of Carthage and Cadiz, a city older than Jerusalem, a rival of Damascus, stands the Arab village of Saida, a heap of walls and gardens, a few yellow houses and a mosque. From the coast above Sidon, swell the heights of Lebanon, shoulder on shoulder, high above the line of unmelting snow. These are the Cedar Mountains, peopled by the Maronite and Druse. Higher than

the rest of these heights, soars Hermon; holy, beautiful Hermon, with its bold front, its snowy peak, and its shining cloud; the Alp of Israel; visible from her high places, her boundary on the north, everywhere glittering in her sight like a star. From the dip at its feet, gush the waters of Jordan.

Between these four natural frontiers—Hermon on the north, Jordan on the east, Carmel on the south, the great sea on the west—lies that province of Galilee in which the Saviour lived from infancy to manhood.

Below us, in front of Haifa, glow the fires of a Moslem camp, and a few miles up the wady of Nazareth, is Cabouli, busy with that question of questions which has outlived the sword of Gideon and the genius of Ibrahim. He is trying to hold in check the Bedaween tribes, now moved into sedition by the acts of Akeel Aga.

Fire, theft and murder, are reported day by day from every part of Galilee. Nazareth is held in a sort of siege. By Cabouli's order, a Frank is not suffered to move inland from the sea coast, unless he be attended by a guard of ten Bashi Bazouks; a dashing, frothy addition to your troop; whom in any case you will have to feed, and in the event of danger to defend. To a painter, to a story-teller, these fellows are worthy of their salt; they will sit for their portraits, sing round the watch-fires, prose about robbery and war, hunt jackals and shoot eagles, in short, do anything you require of them save fight. Like all true Arabs, they shrink and shudder at the sight of blood; and most of them

having been thieves from their youth upwards, they pity and condemn the folly which impels a Frank to defend his saddle-bags at the risk of his life. This troop of horse must ride in your front, not because Cabouli believes in a dozen Bashi Bazouks repelling a charge of Anezi spears; he knows that on hearing the first crack of a pistol, they will wheel and fly with a shout. He sends them in some part for show, and in some part for use. Seeing that you are a Frank, he knows that if you fall into a snare, you will be likely to fight, and that when your blood is up, there is a chance of your being speared or shot; in which case the murderers will have to be discovered and fines levied on their tribe; and he can trust these fellows to bring him news of the fray, the name of the offender, and the amount of your loss.

CHAPTER XVII.

Akeel Aga.

WHO is Akeel Aga?

The pashas call him an Arab; in one sense he is so; but the Bedaween call him a Memlook. He is certainly from the Nile, and is probably of foreign blood.

When Ibrahim undertook to keep the peace in Galilee, he planted a strong colony of Arabs from Cairo at the head of those passes above Cana and Nazareth by which the Anezi and Beni Sakkr swarm over from the Lake Country into the great plains of Esdraelon and Shefelah. These colonists from the desert round the pyramids, loyal and brave, well armed, well mounted, and seventeen hundred strong, proved able and more than able to protect their new lands; and the Syrian Arabs, learning to fear their lances, gave them the name of Hanadi, from an idea that they had come from India; that is to say, not from India Proper, but from the hot regions beyond the Arabian Gulf. Akeel was a young sheikh in this Egyptian tribe.

The youth had in him something of that genius for intrigue and war which made his old master, Mohammed Ali, a ruling prince. Clever, daring, and unprincipled, he seems to have first served, then abandoned, his Egyptian chief; for while Ibrahim

kept his hold on Syria, Akeel was his most faithful slave; but when Napier shelled the Egyptians out of Acre, Akeel sold his sword to the returning Turk. In a country which knew either law or peace, either unity or strength, a man like Akeel could have done no great harm to his new sovereign. But Syria is not a country of law and peace. In the province which his tribe had been set to watch, there exists no right, no charter, no ascendency, save that of the strong arm and the scheming brain. In Galilee, as in every part of Palestine, there may be tents and towns, convents and mosques, but no race, no people, and no law. Every man fears his neighbour as of old, and in the province of Galilee there are perhaps as many gods as in the times of Herod the Great. From the hill of Nazareth, in gazing over a noble landscape, you may count the habitations of Christian, Jew, and Moslem, each sect as intolerant of the other as in the Apostolic times an Arab was of a Greek, a Samaritan of a Jew. In the north dwell the Maronite and the Druse, and, hated by both, that sect of the Ansayreh whose obscene rites no Frank has yet been suffered to see and live. Everywhere you find division, everywhere strife. Men who herd goats detest their brethren who till the ground, as if the quarrel of Cain and Abel had become an inheritance of the tent and field. Every one's hand is raised against his fellow. The charities and affinities which in Europe soften men's hearts are here unknown. Love of country and pride of race, are phrases which convey no meaning to a Syrian ear. In Syria there are now no Syrians;

nothing but hostile races and rival sects. The very name of Syria is unknown to the natives:—being the delusion of a Greek sailor, from whom it descended to the makers of books and maps.

In such a community, power lies in the strong man, not in the just law. A sheikh is lord of his tribe, an abbot of his convent, a rabbi of his synagogue. Let the reigning man be called emperor, caliph, king, the true rulers of the land will always be those who are on the spot, the nearest rabbi, priest, and sheikh. In his own tent, a sheikh is both king and judge. When he is daring, like Akeel and Abu Gosh, he may enlarge his sphere. A man of genius may snatch at a crown. Mohammed Ali exchanged a shop in Cavalla for a palace in Cairo.

Posted on the hills beyond Nazareth, in the ways by which the Anezi swarm into these hills and pastures, Akeel very soon made himself a name of fear. No power in Palestine can wholly prevent these Bedaween raids. The Anezi are hungry and brave, their horses fleet and strong; they travel in the dark, and carry off the maize by stealth. Like Gideon, a man may be threshing his corn by night, and he shall not escape from their hands. Yet much can be done against them by a resolute man who knows their nature and is not afraid to act against them. When they move in large bands, they can be watched, overtaken, and dispersed; when they move in small bands, they may be captured or slain. Now, in this good work of smiting the Anezi back into their deserts, Akeel won his earliest notice from the Turks.

Under his bright eye and trenchant rule, the Arabs were pressed back on the Jordan; the valleys became a trifle more secure; the fields of Esdraelon were sown with corn. It never could be said that Galilee was quieted, for the scheming brain of the Egyptian sheikh soon told him that his own importance in the country hung on his power to suppress disorder, and that there could be no room for the exercise of skill, no occasion for his master to grant rewards, unless he contrived that there should always be a good deal of riot to chastise. To keep the Anezi in spirits, he sometimes allowed them to escape with a little booty; yet after a few years of his reign the hill country had so far improved in order, safety, and prosperity, that the villagers of many places, beyond his own district, claimed his protecting wing, and a very large tract of Galilee fell under his sway.

A man of glib tongue, of serpentine manner, Akeel began to court the Christians, make himself useful to strangers, and above all to ingratiate himself with the English and French. Finding him useful, the Porte increased his powers and enlarged his district. Even in London and Paris his name was mentioned, and princes and emperors vied with each other in doing honour to the subtle Egyptian sheikh. The Prince of Wales, whom he escorted through his territories, gave him a fine revolver. Napoleon sent him the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. Abdul Medjid raised him to the rank of Aga, and signed his commission of colonel in the force which he then commanded, and which was taken

into imperial pay. Such favours might have turned an older head. It is alleged against him in Stamboul, that from the date of his receiving that red ribbon from Paris, he fell into intrigue, and became a tool of the French.

The schemes which some of the Turks attribute to Akeel, are not so much the proofs of his genius as evidence of the fear in which he is held. Having by his measures in Galilee come into conflict with numbers of the Fedan, Weled Ali, and Beni Sakkr, branches of the great Anezi nation, he artfully converted these enemies into friends and allies; persuading them of his great authority with the sultan, whose officer he was; and permitting them to make an occasional foray into districts which had either neglected to make him presents, or had otherwise incurred his wrath. Then, it is said, he took to himself a wife from the family of a great Syrian sheikh. These steps are supposed to have been only the opening moves of his game. It is supposed in Stamboul that he sought every opportunity of showing the chiefs of the Anezi and Shammar that the land is their own, that the Turks keep them out of their right, and that they may win it from these conquerors again: first, by healing up their feuds; secondly, by uniting their friendly spears; thirdly, by a succession of rapid and harassing attacks on their common foe. Some fancy that the end which he may have in view is to form a confederacy of Arab tribes under the protectorate of France. The dread of such a union may be vague and slight; for the feuds of the Shammar and Anezi are born in the blood and bone; yet

the project has been so far annoying to the government of Abdul Aziz, as to provoke Fuad Pasha into ordering measures of defence.

On being called by the Seraskier to Damascus, Akeel, false himself, and fearful of falling into a snare, excused himself from obeying his superior officer, on account of the troubles in his country, then slowly recovering from the relief occasioned by the departing Zouaves from Beyrout. Two or three robberies on the road, by agents of his own, caused an alarm at Haifa, and seemed to satisfy the Frank consul that Akeel's presence was required near home. A French boat took the news of these disorders to Stamboul; M. de Moustier telegraphed it to Paris; evidence, as he said, that the country was already disturbed and that all honest men desired the Zouaves to be sent back. But Fuad, the grand vizier and seraskier, having views of his own in Syria, which an army of Franks would not be likely to promote, ordered Akeel to be checked and reduced; when Cabouli recalled his commission, put a new colonel in his place, and brought his services in Galilee to an end.

Then came the usual stages of a conflict in the Syrian hills. A band of marauders overran Galilee. Some of the Hanadi troops threw down their arms; and those who remained true to their caliph would not lift a carbine against their sheikh. The Beni Sakkr and the Weled Ali spread themselves joyously through the plains. Every night a village was on fire; every day an outrage was committed on the roads. Caravans going inland from Acre were

obliged to stop; invalids trying to reach the baths of Tiberias were driven back. The consuls declined to give any more passes and protections. From Beyrout to Damascus, from Damascus to Hebron, the whole country felt the shock of this man's revolt, and the consuls of countries which have no love for Turkey and no desire to see Syria tranquil, called on the government to restore his commission and replace him in his post. But Cabouli, fearing that to replace the rebel in his command would be to reward his revolt by making him master of Galilee, with the sole exceptions of Acre and other sea-coast towns, instead of listening to French counsels, requested Daoud, pasha of the Lebanon, to keep an eye on the Druses, and begged the seraskier of Damascus to detach a body of horse from Banias, with orders to sweep both banks of the Jordan as far south as the Dead Sea, while he marched in person at the front of some companies of foot into these passes, in the hope of either forcing Akeel to fight, or intercepting his flight to the South.

Such is Akeel Aga; a man racy of the soil; one who has had his counterpart in every age of the history of Galilee. What Akeel is to-day, Judas of Gamala was in the days of Christ, and Joshua ben Sapphias was in the days of Paul.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Province of Galilee.

GALILEE, always the garden of Syria, might become that of the world. Everything grows here, from the Caspian walnut to the Egyptian palm. While the hills of Judah are stern and bare, and the meadows of Sharon burnt and dry, these wadies of Galilee are almost everywhere laughing with herbs and flowers. A forest of oak clothes the sides of Mount Carmel. Cedar clumps nestle in the clefts of Mount Hermon. Myrtles enlarge into trees, and myriads of orange blossoms throw their scent into the air. Every hill is a vineyard; every bottom a corn-field. The delta of the Nile is not more sunny; the vega of Granada is not more picturesque; the ghota of Damascus is not more green and bright. For here the fierce sun and the refreshing rain come together, and water flows through Galilee, not in tanks and pools, but poured out royally towards the sea in streams.

Going up from Acre to Nazareth, you ride along a bit of old Roman pavement which recalls the Campagna; then by a broad camel track like the way beyond Memphis; anon you are passing over grass land, and thorny bush, and rough rocky tracks. There is no real road; yet every turn of the path, every change in the scene, will recall some favourite

passage in either Germany, Italy, or Spain. Here you have the woods of Lucca, there the vine slopes near Xeres; yon tell reminds you of Loja; and a hundred terraces, rich with the red and white grape, send you off in imagination to the Rhine. Among these softly-rounded hills, many of them clothed to the top with vines, an eye which is familiar with the scenery of Heidelberg and Ulm, may easily feel itself at home.

It happens now, as of old, that the Arab and the Frank feel an equal attraction in the soil of Galilee. An Arab finds on it the bread and water for which he pines in the desert; a Frank can see in it the scenery and associations of his youth. There has never been a time in which this beautiful province was not peopled by a mixture of races from the East and West.

At the period when our Lord was a child in Nazareth, one of its midland towns—lying on the slope of a hill about four miles from the capital, Sephoris—Galilee was inhabited by a population of Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, Cypriotes, Italians, Arabs; men speaking separate idioms, following hostile fashions, and kneeling to rival gods. Events had brought these races into the land. Asher, unable to subdue the great cities of the plain and coast—for the Hebrew was a bad rider and a worse sailor, and the rich flats belong to men who can rein a horse, as surely as the isles and shores belong to men who can handle ships—had left them in the hands of that proud race of horsemen and seamen, the English of antiquity, whose cities were Tyre and

Sidon, and who defended the plains against Barak and David with the same valour and success which they had shown in defending the coasts against pirates and invaders from the West. When these strong cities had fallen before enemies fighting from the sea, the people had retreated towards the hills, carrying with them their arts, their riches, their intelligence, and their gods; and the dykes being broken by their fall, wave after wave poured over from the sea into Galilee; Cypriotes, Egyptians, Macedonians, Romans; each wave of invasion flinging new blood into the houses, introducing new arts into the country, and planting strange deities in the groves and temples.

Thus, the people of Galilee had become a mixed though they were not a blended community. Most of the reapers and sowers of grain were of Syrian stock; of the Canaanite rather than of the Arab branch. The vine-dressers and husbandmen were mostly Jews; but Jews who were considered by the men of Judah as provincials. Many of the artizans, most of the traders dwelling in towns, were descended from those princes of Tyre and Sidon who had been driven by Alexander and Pompey from the sea. Other artizans and traders had come in the ranks of foreign armies from Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. In cities which lay along the coast, like Ptolemais and Tyre, and in strong inland forts like Sephoris and Gadara, lived the more supple and artistic Greeks, the workers in gold and marble, the rhetoricians and painters, the orators, dancers, amatory poets, the professors of every art, and, as the Jews

considered them, the propagators of every vice. From Italy, from Gaul and Spain, a more robust, and perhaps a more licentious rabble, had been poured over the country to eat it up; legionaries, lawyers, gladiators, courtezans, charioteers, procurators and police. But the most picturesque figure in this picturesque group has still to be named. Through the midst of these peasants of the soil, these Jews of the hamlet, these Greek and Egyptian strangers of the city, roved the wild and pastoral tribes, the untamed children of Ishmael and Esau, men who still dwelt under their black tents, driving their flocks and herds from valley to valley, coming with the verdure, going with the dearth, and owning no allegiance to either Cæsar or to his tributary kings.

These rival lords of the soil—Jew, Greek, and Arab, never mixed with each other, never married, never dwelt together, never fused into one people, like the populations of Ulster, Canada, and the Cape; but kept in their own lines and their own tribes; each man fearing his neighbour as a foe; distinct in blood, in aspect and in faith, like the Metuali and the Turk, the Maronite and the Druse, the Armenian and the Frank, of the present hour. No art of Greece was bright enough, no might of Rome was strong enough to fuse and bind them. The lion could not persuade the lamb to lie down. The Jew would not bend in spirit. In dress, in custom, and in character, the native and the stranger were as rivals and offenders to each other; forbidden by law, and by habit which is stronger than law, to eat of

the same dish, to drink of the same cup, to lie on the same bed, to walk with the same staff. A jar, a knife, a sack which a stranger touched with his fingers became in the eyes of a Jew unclean. This dark and unsocial spirit had no existence among the blithe and radiant Greeks; it was a Jewish feeling, based on what the Separatist imagined to be his Sacred Law. But in order that two men shall not come together, it is only required that one shall fly from the other. A dozen generations of Greeks and Jews had lived in the same wadies of Galilee, and the people had grown no nearer in love and fellowship than they were in the day when one side was red with triumph, the other crushed by defeat. Nor was a change in their relations likely to come about so long as the empire of Jewish law should last. How could it come to pass in a nation of Separatists? A Jew could not sleep in a Greek city; a Syrian was not suffered to enter a Hebrew door.

Speaking then in a broad way of this mixed population of Galilee, it may be said that the Greeks lived in walled cities, the Jews in open towns, the Syrians in huts and sheds, the Arabs in nomadic tents.

In such great cities as Ptolemais, Sephoris, and Gadara, the public life was that of an Asiatic Athens, and the language of commerce, learning, and society, was Greek. In his own house, among his own family, a Jew might speak Aramaic, the old idiom of his race, the mother-tongue of Hebrew, as Anglo-Saxon is of English; that dialect of Abram and Laban, of Rachel and Leah, which in the time of

the kings had become a learned language among the Jews, as Anglo-Saxon is now among Britons; but which the course of events revived and extended until it replaced among common people, for all common uses, the more elastic and poetic idiom of David and Isaiah. Again, the Ishmaelites from beyond Jordan spoke a dialect of Arabic, which Haroun al Raschid would have been puzzled to translate, though Solomon would perhaps have been able to understand it; for that Hebrew tongue which Moses and the tribes had brought away from Egypt was not the language carried to the Nile by Joseph and the eleven, but apparently a fresh growth from the old tongue and the new country, mainly Arabic, which in its turn began to fall away after the Hebrews had conquered Syria, until, in the days after the captivity and return, it had wholly disappeared. In the Galilee of Christ, an Arab would have been able to read the Psalms more fluently than a Jew.

The only tongue that could pretend to be a common vehicle for all these families was that of Greece. Every man of a higher grade than a hewer of wood and drawer of water, every man who had to move about the province, who had to deal with the stranger, to appear in a law court, to consult a physician, to discharge any public function, in fact, the merchant, citizen, priest, and courtier, was compelled to practise Greek. It was the only medium of the court, the colleges, and the camp. In the time when our Lord was a child at Nazareth, this noble language had that predominance in Galilee

which English has acquired in Calcutta, French in Algiers, and Turkish in Stamboul.

The gods of Galilee had been multiplied, but they had not been changed. The soldiers of Alexander and of Cæsar, tolerant as Pagans were of all local deities, had rather encouraged than repressed the religions which they found prevailing on the soil. Zeus and Aphrodite feared no rivals. Coming into the country with the phalanx and the legion, they had taken their places quietly in a pantheon large enough for all.

Syria is the prolific soil of creeds; the source from which has sprung nearly all the more vivid and enduring systems of the world. Phœnicia lent its gods to Egypt, Egypt to Greece, and Greece to Rome, so that when Venus and Jupiter returned to Galilee in the wake of Cæsar, they were only coming home to their parent soil.

In like manner, the Jews, the Christians, and the Moslems, trace back their faith to these Syrian shores, on which there has always been, as there is even now, an abounding nursery of religious creeds. In the days of Herod the Great, as many deities fought for supremacy in Galilee as fight in the Lebanon now; Ashtoreth ruling over the Sidonians, Molech over the Syrians, Isis over the Egyptians, Dagon over the Philistines, Manah over the Ishmaelites, Artemis over the Greeks, Jupiter over the Romans.

If any man could have fused these nations into one people—making the Maccabean Jew a fellow-citizen of the many-sided Greek—that man would

have been found in Herod the Great; a prince who, from being a mere captain in Galilee, rose by natural genius and Cæsar's favour, to occupy David's throne.

CHAPTER XIX.

Herod the Great.

By birth an Arab, by profession a Jew, by necessity a Roman, Herod was by culture and by choice a Greek. All his tastes, his pleasures, his studies were Attic. He loved to imitate the Ionian architecture, and to revive the Olympian games; he spent his leisure in reading the poets and historians of Athens; he gave Hellenic names to his children; he stamped on his coins the helmet and shield, as though claiming for his house a Macedonian descent. An Arab as Napoleon was a Corsican, a Jew as Henri Quatre was a Catholic, a Roman as Mohammed Ali was a Turk, Herod was an Hellene of his free choice; with all the strength and all the weakness which belonged to an Asiatic Greek; being graceful, tolerant, cultivated, luxurious, while he was at the same time cruel, faithless, selfish, and insincere.

His freedom from the darker passions of his race, was a power which he well knew how to use in dealing with his Greek and Syrian subjects; but it proved a weakness to him when he had to control the Separatist Jews. In one respect he breathed their spirit and played their game, for he joined to a splendid taste in art, to a vast capacity for war, and to a burning lust of territory, the Separatist's hope of driving out the conquerors of Syria, dividing

the Oriental empire of Augustus, and stretching his hands, like Solomon, from the Euphrates to the sea.

To this end, he tore the crown from the Maccabees, swept away their Sanhedrin, and thinned the new princely families by the sword. With a strong hand he divided the great offices which ought never to have been joined; separating once more the Temporal from the Spiritual Powers. Herod sent to Babylon for a new high priest, whom he found in Ananelus, a man of the sacerdotal house. When Ananelus fell, through an intrigue of the hareem, and Aristobulus, his Maccabean successor, was put to death, Herod sent to Alexandria for Simon, son of Boëthus (probably a kinsman of Onias), married his daughter, and made him high priest. In every action of his reign, Herod courted the commons at the expense of their princes; seeking by art, profession, and expenditure to rouse in them a hope that they had found in him the Deliverer for whom they daily cried to Heaven. A new palace was laid out on Zion; new synagogues were added to Bezetha; the city walls were raised and strengthened in every part; and towers were built on the north, where the Assyrian camp came nearest to the wall. Baths, bastions, gates, seemed to rise from the ground by magical arts. Jerusalem had not been so splendid in Solomon's days, for Herod could command into his service of improvement the masons and architects of Greece. It is scarcely a figure of speech to say that he rebuilt Zion as Nero rebuilt Rome, leaving a city of marble where he had found one of mud and lime.

At length, as a visible type of the restored kingdom of Solomon, he commenced a new and more costly Temple than had ever yet been raised in the name of God.

It seemed as though he might succeed, in spite of the barriers raised up against him by the Oral Law, in reconciling Jew and Greek. He chose his wives as much from policy as from love. He won the Maccabeans to his side by marrying Mariamne, the daughter of Alexander, and the populace by marrying Mariamne, the daughter of Simon, their new high priest. In like manner, he conciliated the nobles of Samaria by wedding Malthace, one of the noblest damsels of Sebaste. In the Gentile cities he was adored; and in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, he was equally liked and feared. Externally, the chief obstacle to an empire spreading from Euphrates to the sea, was Aretas, king of Petra; one of those dashing emirs of the desert who never succumbed to the Roman arms. Aretas not only repulsed his enemies beyond the Moab mountains, but swept into Galilee, ravaged Esdraelon, and rode with his light horse over the Carmel range. Unable to subdue this Arab prince, Herod made offers to him of peace and friendship; settling the frontier lines, and asking his daughter in marriage for Antipas, then his favourite son, and natural heir to his crown. When peace was signed between Jew and Arab, Herod built for himself a country house at Macherus, on the Moab frontier; a palace, a garden, a bath, a guard-room, a tower; which in a few years became the strongest city standing east of the Dead Sea. Through his

garrison at Macherus, and his kinsmen in Petra, Herod was able to control the Desert, and during the rest of his long reign the husbandmen of Judah and Galilee could till their soil with very little fear of being plundered by the nomadic tribes.

Who was now like unto Herod the Great? The Maccabean party in Jerusalem was crushed. The Boëthus family served in the Temple. In Sebaste, in Sephoris, his power was more firmly established than even in Jerusalem and Jericho. Cæsar treated him as a brother. From Damascus to Alexandria his voice was heard and his arm was felt. In the pomp of his court, in the number of his troops, in the width of his dominion, who could compare with him? Simon, the most fortunate of all the Maccabees, had been a mere sheikh, the soldier of a tribe; Herod was a mighty prince, the successor and the rival of their greatest king. What marvel, then, that many of those Separatists who were praying for a Messiah should have turned to him, and that the Herodians should have become a sect in the synagogue, a party in the court?

But the king's unrivalled genius, guided by prudence, courtesy, and patience, failed to overcome the bigotries fostered in his people by the Oral Law. The grounds of hostility between Jew and Greek, lay deep in the nature of their faith, and in that stage of their growth nothing save a spiritual action could have changed them. Herod fought against the Separatist spirit with a secular arm, and the chivalry which he displayed in dealing with the professors of these adverse creeds was one cause of his

failure to reconcile them to each other. In truth, Herod was too large a man for that part of false Messiah which events were thrusting on him. He could not play the hypocrite night and day. Having taken his seat near the holy place, having tasted the paschal lamb and the bitter herbs, having put the phylacteries on his brow, and broadened the bands on his cloak, his means of kindling the Pharisaic imagination had come to an end. Not being a Separatist in soul, he was unable to sound the new depths and shallows of Jewish life, even so far as to answer the popular desire in external show. It was hard for him to talk, impossible to feel, like a partizan of the Oral Law.

Herod aimed at two points which stand far apart:—at being received as a servant of the One God, and as a champion of all the gods. He would have liked to garner the political advantages of being a Jew, while enjoying the personal delights of being a Greek. In pursuance of this vain dream, while he was restoring the palace of David on Mount Zion, under the city wall near the Bethlehem gate, he built a Greek palace for his pleasures at Herodion, the Mount of Paradise, near that Bethlehem khan in which the true Messiah was about to be born. But in all these compromises between Jew and Greek, Herod was frank and open; never hiding what he did and what he thought; letting the Gentiles know that he never failed to observe the feasts of Purim and Passover; and showing the Jews that in cities which he loved much more and favoured much less than Jerusalem — the lustrous Jericho, the

pillared Sebaste, the sea-washed Cæsarea—he went up to the temples of Zeus and Artemis. The people knew all his ways. They told each other in the gateway, that the prince whom many Jews called their Messiah, had raised a shrine to Apollo in the Isle of Rhodes, and in the city of Antioch had revived the Olympic games; and they learned to curse him in their hearts, as a man who put strangers on a level with the holy race.

In like manner, this spirit of Pagan courtesy and conciliation failed between the Jewish sects, just as it failed between Jew and Greek. While he was rebuilding the great Temple on Moriah, Herod had given orders to rebuild the Samaritan temple in Gerizim. When he had married Mariamne, daughter of the popular high priest in Jerusalem, he offered his hand and throne to Malthace, one of the noblest maidens of Sebaste. These efforts to heal the great feud of ages only ended in vexing his friends and maddening his foes. The Samaritan priests could not forgive his being a Jew; the Jewish priests could not endure his Gerizim temple and his Samaritan wife.

Thus, a man who read Homer and Hesiod more than Micah and Jeremiah, and who was blind to many of the subtleties and distinctions of the Jewish faith, though he made himself master of the land by force, exhausted his genius in the vain attempt to make Syria into a nation on the principles of a cultured and liberal Greek.

Beyond the weaknesses which had their source in this tolerant condition of Herod's mind, his per-

sonal life was such as to estrange from him the sympathies of all good and honest men. In freedom of living, not less than in genius, valour, and success, he reproduced in Syria the image of an old Greek tyrant. Some writers have perceived a reflex of Herod in our own Henry the Eighth. That a few points of character and fortune may be found in the two men is not to be denied; but Henry had passed through a clean and winsome youth; while no part of the great Arab's life had ever been pure. If Herod had nine wives, all living at the same time, or near it, he had also a far greater number of favourites who were not his wives. The most famous of his many queens was Mariamne, the Maccabean; of his many concubines, Cleopatra, queen of Egypt: he murdered the first in his rage, and he coldly designed to betray the second to death. In his love affairs he was Egyptian rather than Jewish; for he took to his bed more than one woman who was nearer of kin to him than the Oral Law allowed. One of his wives was his brother's child, another was his sister's child.

One of his earliest crimes was that massacre of priests and nobles, seventy in number, on which he based his power. His private murders were uncounted; but it is matter of record that he caused his brother-in-law, Aristobulus, to be drowned; that he slew his wife's grandfather, Hyrcanus; that he killed his uncle Joseph and his sister's husband, Cortobanus; that he put Antipater, his own first-born son, to death. Household murder stained his hearth to the last. He not only took away the life of his

proud queen Mariamne, but strangled the two princes, Alexander and Aristobulus, his sons by her. He killed their aged grandmother, Alexandra. Some of his nearest friends and companions—Dosetheus, Gadias, Lysimachus—he either strangled or clove in twain. As age grew heavy upon him, and the dream of empire faded away, his indolent ferocity increased, and the lightest fear that fell upon his heart provoked an order to shed blood. As he neared the grave, life seemed to have lost all beauty in his eyes. In every part of Palestine, aged men, unoffending women, young children, were put to the sword. Among other tragedies caused by his rage and fear, that swoop of soldiers on the city of Bethlehem, though it was one of the least, is the best remembered of all his crimes.

In the very year of that massacre of innocents, this splendid and wicked prince perished like a dog; dying in the great palace which he had built for himself in Jericho; not of old age, but of putrid sores; not in the midst of honour and respect, in the presence of wife and child, but surrounded by quarrelling kinsmen and conspiring slaves. One slave, named Simon, declaring himself the Jewish Messiah, placed the dead man's crown upon his brow, enlisted a troop of Arabs from Perea, plundered the royal palace of its treasures, and burnt the magnificent pile to its foundations. Many of the people hailed this slave as Christ and King; until Valerius Gratus, the Roman general, marching against him, overthrew his forces, and struck off his head.

The great kingdom of Herod, recovered from a

slave and his gang of marauders by the Roman arms, was not destined to outlive him. Antipas Herod, his eldest son by his Samaritan queen, Malthace, got Galilee and Perea, with the Greek title of Tetrarch, ruler of a fourth part. Archelaus, a younger son of the same queen, had Samaria and Judea, with the Greek title of Ethnarch, ruler of a nation, and a promise from Cæsar, never to be redeemed, of the royal rank. Philip, one of his sons by his wife Cleopatra, received Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, all beyond Jordan, and some parts of Sharon near Jaffa, with the title of Tetrarch. Salome, sister of the great king, obtained Jamnia and Ashdod in the Plain of Sharon, with Phasaelus, a new city built by Herod in the Plain of Jericho. To make these rents and fissures in the kingdom more complete, the strong Greek cities of Gaza, Hippos, and Gadara were detached from the Jewish provinces in which they stood and which they held in check. Valerius Gratus, while appearing to be only zealous for Herod's kin, took care to arrange his kingdom so that its provinces could be annexed to the empire whenever it might suit the plans of his masters in Rome.

Genius, valour, courtesy, eloquence, and taste, had come to nothing, to worse than nothing, in Herod's hands. He had crushed the nobles, but he had not raised the multitude. In fighting against the intolerant spirit of the Oral Law, he had toiled to a noble end; but the means to that end were beyond his reach and perhaps beyond his conception. The way to unite a crowd of hostile sects into one

people, is not by pandering to every passion and delusion in its turn, but by kindling in the whole body of rivals a new spiritual passion hot enough to consume the old. Herod provided games, rites, comedies, architecture, for a society too much corrupted ever to become a nation except by being born afresh. To become one in heart, the Jew and the Greek required, not old shows, but a new spiritual life. But this new life of the spirit is a gift which kings and governors have not to give.

CHAPTER XX.

Judas the Galilean.

AFTER Herod's death, the experiment in which he had failed was tried from another side, on Separatist principles; and the schisms and parties then dividing Galilee, town against hamlet, house against tent, altar against synagogue, temple against grove, received a crowning division in that of Pharisee against Pharisee. A new sect was now to arise in Galilee, and to be known by the name of that province; a sect more Separatist than the Separatists, and more hostile to strangers than even the Jews of Zion. They were to call themselves Zealots, as being anxious for morality and religion; and when they became formidable to the ruling powers, as they swiftly became, they were to be denounced in the Sanhedrin and the Synagogue under the names of Swordsmen and Brigands. The strife between Samaria and Judea was in a few years to be surpassed in bitterness by the great feud between Galilee and Judea.

The leader of the new schism was Judas of Gamala.

One of the worst results of that policy of Separation and isolation into which the Jews had sunk under the Maccabees, was the wild misreading of the Messianic prophecies, into which so many of the people

fell. Poor peasants and fishermen heard that a Deliverer was to come; they felt the need of him in their hearts and in their lives; the more they found themselves straying like lost sheep, the more they expected a Sephered who should restore them to the fold. But they had ceased to understand their prophets in the old spirit of their race. They had come to mix up the Persian Vendidad with the Mosaic Pentateuch; and the political theories by which they had replaced the Mosaic Law, inclined them to expect a political Christ, a prince, a warrior, a lawgiver of the earth; a man who could drive out the strangers from their soil, who could march on Jerusalem, occupy the throne of David, and, hating all Gentile nations, dwell among his people in kingly pomp.

A Sadducee, rich in palaces and gardens, learned in the poetry and philosophy of Greece, might laugh at these dreams of potters and goatherds; yet the hope of seeing such a prince arise was so common throughout Jewry, that no man of genius, whether soldier, sorcerer, or priest, could spring into fame without exciting in thousands of eager hearts a strong belief that the Messiah for whom they waited had come at last.

Within a dozen years after the death of Herod the Great, a dozen of these false Messiahs were proclaimed by deluded and deluding crowds; the most eminent, perhaps, being Judas of Gamala, and his sons Simon and James, Hillel the Babylonian, Athrongæus the shepherd, and Simon the slave. Judas of Gamala, though his career was short, is a

figure in Jewish story not less important than that of Herod the Great.

More than all that Akeel is suspected of desiring to accomplish against Turkey, Judas desired to effect against Rome. Akeel draws none of his passion from religious hate. He acknowledges Cabouli's caliph, prays in Cabouli's mosque. Judas of Gamala was driven forward by his spiritual frenzy even more than by his lust of secular power. But if the inspiring cause was different, the results were much the same; a considerable revolt, a yet more considerable disturbance; vexing the Romans in Galilee very much as Abd-el-Kader teased the Freneh and as Akeel Aga distracts the Turks. Judas of Gamala being a man of the tongue even more than of the sword, his faculties of mischief could neither be confined to a province, nor extinguished with a life.

Judas, though he is mentioned by Gamaliel as a man of Galilee, appears to have been born in Gaulonitis beyond Jordan, in Gamala, a city built on a mountain spur, shaped liked a camel, whence it derived its name. This place stood on the hill side, opposite to Tarichæa, looking down upon the lake. A man of priestly lineage, an Arab of the old type, simple in life, severe in aspect, Judas conceived that like Elijah he had received a message to his countrymen from the Lord. Devoted, soul and spirit, to the Oral Law, and resolved to make the Separatist theory his rule of life, he went through the hamlets of Galilee preaching the great doctrines that national liberty is the chiefest good—that men are all equals.

in rank and power—that there is no king, no master in the world, save God. Men listened to his words. A party gathered round him, deeming him the Prophet that was to come. Like Judas the Maccabee, he called to his banners those only who were in despair and were ready to perish; and he taught his followers to despise pain and death, to defy the cord and the cross, and to rush on a line of swords with a gladsome alacrity which amazed the most hardened stoics and veterans of Rome.

When Cyrenius first came into Galilee and Judea to number the people, as a basis for levying the poll-tax of a denarius—eight-pence of our present English money—per head, Judas lifted up his voice against him; denouncing his census as unlawful, his levy as impious; saying that this gift of a denarius to Cæsar was an offensive imitation of the half-stater annually paid by a Jew to God. He urged the people to resist the census and the tax. Young and ardent men threw themselves under his flag; for in the simple life and daring words of Judas they discerned the style of that Christ who was to lead them against the Gentile host.

As yet his camp had been composed of poor people from the vineyards, and fisheries, and workshops; but this denunciation of Cyrenius and the poll-tax brought to his side a Pharisee of high rank named Sadok; after whose adhesion to what they announced as the national cause, the party increased in every part of Jewry, even in the Holy City. Feeling their strength, the Galileans raised the old Jewish standard; seizing the strong places, proclaim.

ing a holy war, and like true Arab combatants plundering both friend and foe. The burning of temples and groves might have been justified on religious grounds, the destruction of Greek cities and castles on military grounds; but the followers of Judas and Sadok, despising all property which was not their own, and wishing to drive the peasants to despair, put fire to the granaries and trampled on the vines. Yet the people bore their losses with an Oriental calm. Messiah must know what he ought to do; if the Jews suffered much from Judas, the Greeks suffered more; and the faithful could find comfort in the thought that on the morrow of their final victory over Rome, the gold and silver of Sephoris, Ptolemais, and a hundred other cities, would be all their own.

Cyrenius met this army of fanatics in the open field, broke them at a charge, and putting Judas and Sadok to a cruel death, soon scattered the remnants of their bands into all the hamlets of Galilee. The blow was prompt. The victory seemed to be complete. But it only seemed so; sword may meet sword, but cannot root up an idea from the soul. These vine-dressers and boatmen, poor in education, but rich in faith, believing that Judas was the Messiah, come into the world to fulfil the Oral Law, and that he would either rise again in the flesh or live in the persons of his children, transferred their loyalty from the murdered prophet to his sons Simon and James. So far from being ended, the revolt of the Galileans had only just begun. But James and Simon, warned by their father's fate,

kept quiet in their retreats, watching the course of events, increasing the number of their disciples, and preparing the arms and discipline as well as the passions and animosities of a grander war.

Twenty years after their father's murder, Simon and James were at the head of a powerful sect, including most of the Jews in Galilee, many of those in Gaulonitis and Perea, not a few of those in Judea and Jerusalem, especially among the poorer classes.

A Greek who was at that time studying Jewish politics, might have ranked these Galileans between the Essenes and Pharisees, for while they were Essenic in their habits, they were Pharisaic in their opinions. With the Essenes they professed to despise riches, to reject pomp and state, to own no master, to give no titles, to kneel only to God; with the Pharisees they expected a deliverer, a holy war, a conquest of the Romans, and a kingdom of the saints.

Unlike Herod the Great, who had tried to break down the barriers dividing Greeks and Arabs, Samaritans and Jews, so as to melt a hundred tribes and sects into one great Syrian power, having its unity of life in the Greek principle of toleration, Judas, acting in the spirit of the Oral Law, withdrew his people from all intercourse with Gentiles as a thing impolitic and profane. They were to live alone. They were to consider the Greeks as enemies. They were to shun large cities, with their Pagan temples, and their gods of bronze and stone. They were to consider the stranger as a man

accursed; and to have no traffic with him except that of blood.

In his narrow understanding, Judas of Gamala contracted that Jewish brotherhood which was already far too strait. The Pharisee's rules were wider than his soul could grasp, and the only fighting power in Jewry was now reduced into the sect of a sect.

But this warlike and devoted party grew in strength and daring; outlived their courtly rivals called the Herodians; struggled with and subdued their Sadducean enemies; opposed with success the more popular Boëthusians; identified themselves in mass with the whole people; and only perished out of the land when everything was lost. When Jerusalem was carried by assault, when the Temple was burnt to ashes, the gallant men who would call no man lord were exposed and sold for slaves in every market of the Roman world.

But this catastrophe was yet a long way off.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Holy Family.

FOUR miles south of the strong Greek city of Sephoris, hidden away among gentle hills, then covered from the base to the crown with vineyards and fig-trees, lay a natural nest or basin of rich red and white earth, star-like in shape, about a mile in width, and wondrously fertile. Along the scarred and chalky slope of the highest of these hills, spread a small and lovely village, which, in a land where every stone seemed to have a story, is remarkable as having had no public history and no distinguishable native name. No great road led up to this sunny nook. No traffic came into it, no legions marched through it. Trade, war, adventure, pleasure, pomp, passed by it, flowing from west to east, from east to west, along the Roman road. But the meadows were aglow with wheat and barley. Near the low ground ran a belt of gardens, fenced with loose stones, in which myriads of green figs, red pomegranates, and golden citrons ripened in the summer sun. High up the slopes, which were lined and planted like the Rhine at Bingen, hung vintages of purple grapes. In the plain, among the corn and beneath the mulberry trees and figs, shone daisies, poppies, tulips, lilies, and anemones, endless in their profusion, brilliant in their dyes.

Low down on the hill-side sprang a well of water, bubbling, plentiful, and sweet; and above this fountain of life, in a long street straggling from the fountain to the synagogue, rose the homesteads of many shepherds, craftsmen, and vine-dressers. It was a lovely and humble place, of which no poet, no ruler, no historian of Israel had ever yet taken note. No Rachel had been met and kissed into love at this well; no Ruth had gathered up the sheaves of barley in yon fields; no tower had been built for observation on this height; no camp had been pitched for battle in that vale. That One who would become dearer to the fancies of men than either Ruth or Rachel then walked through these fields, drew water at this spring, passed up and down the lanes of this hamlet, no seer could have then surmised. The place was more than obscure. The Arab may have pitched his black tent by the well, the magistrate of Sephoris must have known the village name, but the hamlet was never mentioned by the Jewish scribes. In the Bible, in the Talmud, in the writings of Josephus, we search in vain for any records of this sacred place. Like its happy neighbours, Nain and Endor, it was the abode of husbandmen and oil-pressers, whose lives were spent in the synagogue and in the olive-grove, away from the bright Greek cities and the busy Roman roads. No doubt it had once been possessed of either an Arab or a Hebrew name; but we do not know that name except in its Hellenic form.

The Greeks called the town Nazaret or Nazareth.

Into this nameless Jewish hamlet, there came to live in the days of Judas of Gamala and the Zealots, Joseph of Bethlehem, with his wife and Child.

Joachim, Mary's father, had been already a man of great age when his wife, Anna, a woman who like Sarah had long been childless, gave birth to a daughter, whom the parents called Marian, and whom the Church calls Mary the Blessed Virgin. Though they then dwelt in the province of Galilee, her father and mother were natives of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah and the line of David. Like many other Jews, they seem to have left the hill-country of Judea, in which it was hard for the poor to find bread, and to have settled in those busier and more prosperous parts of Palestine, in which the Greeks had built cities and the Romans had made roads; obeying a movement like that which in our own day draws the Gael to Lanark, the Parsee to Calcutta, the Arab to Algiers. They were not rich people; though they owned goats and sheep, and lived in a good house, in the midst of a garden, and could afford money and time for a yearly journey to Zion at the great festivals of their faith. But Joachim and his wife were richer in blood and in repute than in flocks and herds.

The thousand years which had passed away since their father David reigned over Israel, an interval little less than that which divides yon hajjee in the green turban from his ancestor Mohammed, might serve in any country to lay the

mighty low, turn a Capet into a carter, a Plantagenet into a ploughboy. In that large flux of years, the house of David, scattered into every region of the East, into Egypt and Persia, into Babylon and Arabia, had so fallen from its high estate, that its members had been glad to practise the most ordinary trades. Hillel of Babylon was poorer than Joachim of Nazareth. But no lapse of time, no taint of poverty, will, in countries like Palestine, deprive of due honour and respect a man who is known to be descended from a royal and saintly race. Yon hajjee in the green folds may be poor enough to beg paras in the public street, yet his fellow-beggar, crouching beside him in the dust, and even dividing with him his scanty loaf, will be forward to acknowledge his princely rank; and in the mouths of all classes of his countrymen, he is still shereef and saïb, nobleman and lord. And so it fared with men of the line of David, children of the shepherd king. To be born of that stock, like Hillel and Joachim, was to possess in all Jewish eyes a sacred and inalienable grace.

Husband and wife both died in Nazareth while Marian was yet a child; Joachim, who seems to have had another wife besides Anna, leaving another daughter named Mary (not Marian like the Virgin), a woman of mature age, who had been married to a Jew called Clopas, or, as the name was spelt in Greek, Alphæus, and was left his widow with four or five sons. The two half-sisters dwelt together in their father's house, which by the Jewish law would come to them in equal shares,

on condition that they should marry in their tribe and to their next of kin. Mary, having sons who must inherit her part of the estate, would have no rights to preserve by marrying a second time; but her half-sister and co-heiress was obliged by the law either to marry her next of kin when she came of age, or to forfeit all share in her father's goods.

The man next of kin to Marian was Joseph of Bethlehem; her uncle, it would seem, though some say he was her cousin; a man already old, with sons of his own, grown up into young men. The Jewish rule was strict; girls had no choice; and to marry uncles was a habit of the people. Had not Herod, the reigning king, married two of his nieces? Were not some of his grand-daughters already the wives of his sons?

Joseph, the husband whom Marian was bound by law to marry, was by trade a carpenter; tradition says a bad one, as Syrian craftsmen of the kind have always been. It may be inferred from what is still to be seen every day in Galilee, that he built and repaired boats on the lake, as well as made frames and stools, and cut down poles for tents. Except in the Greek cities, the arts of domestic life were crude. When Joseph wrought at his trade in the village, his bench would be placed in the public way, as you see the carpenters at work in Acre and Nazareth now, and there he would saw and hammer at his planks from dawn to dusk. This occupation of a carpenter would lead him away from home, and his busiest hours when abroad

would probably be spent in such Jewish hamlets as Nain and Cana among the hills, and as Bethsaida and Capernaum on the lake.

The son of Joseph and Marian, born in the grotto, near the great khan of Bethlehem, was called JESUS; a name now sacred and set apart from use; then common among the Jews as either Simon or Judah, and as William and Henry among ourselves. As the boy grew in strength, he was put to learn his father's trade of carpentry, and until his thirtieth year, when he became old enough to teach and preach, he was content to go about the village of Galilee, among the followers of Judas and his sons Simon and James, mending chairs and poles, hewing masts and beams, shaping oars and planks. Is not this the carpenter? said his neighbours of Nazareth, when he began to proclaim the gospel of fraternity and love. With the axe, the plane, the measuring line in his hand, he trudged as a boy at his father's side through these valleys of Zebulon, Issachar, and Naphthali; passing the great cities, in which they would have found no work for Jew carpenters to do; and toiling on the farms and in the villages of their own people, among peasants, carriers, and fishermen, who had little knowledge and less appreciation of the finer arts of Greece.

The position of Jesus in this Nazareth home was something like that of David when a youth in the Bethlehem khan. His half-brothers, being Orientals, treated him, even when he was thirty years of age, as a young man: which in plain English means treating him very much as they

would have done a woman and a slave. The names of these half-brothers, as well as of his cousins, the sons of Mary, being the commonest then used in Israel—James and Judah, Simon and Joses—it is impossible to say how many of them lived in the same house, or even to say which were the children of Clopas and which the children of Joseph. Living in the same town, being all of one tribe, they were known as members of one family, and were only mentioned by writers under the general designation of the Lord's brethren. Clopas left a son named James, and Joseph left a son named James. Each seems to have had a son called Judah. Three sisters lived in the house. More than these facts can hardly be stated, except by guess-work. It is only known that of all these men and women, JESUS, like David among Jesse's children, was the youngest born.

That his mother Marian, who bore him at the age of fifteen, was fair and comely, was a constant tradition of the early Church: a girl having a style of beauty like that of David and Solomon, which is rare in hot countries, and when it occurs is most highly prized. If the Church traditions may be trusted on such a point, backed by such evidence as the Byzantine mosaics and the early missals, the Virgin had blue eyes, a pale skin, low colour, a sweet oval face, with abundance of golden hair.

In her ways of life, she would act no otherwise than like the young Hebrew women of her time and of all times. She would rise early in the day, and going with her creel into the market-place, fill it

with melons and fresh figs, with green cucumbers and grapes. At the third hour she would recite her shema, and at the ninth hour sing a psalm of David. In the evening she would go down with her pitcher to the well and fill it. On the Sabbath, after washing hands, she would go up to the synagogue on the hill-top, where she would sit among the women behind the screen, and hear the Sheliach repeat the lesson set apart for that day. For the rest of her simple and homely life, like the women of her class in these Syrian villages at the present hour, she would boil her pottage over a woodfire, lay her maize on the flat roof to dry, spin thread for domestic use, sweep the dust from her lewan at dusk, and, expecting her husband and her son to come home, spread her mats on the floor and set her viands for them in the shadiest nook of her little court.

Our Western fancies, working through an instinct of nature safer than half-knowledge, have made of this simple life a pastoral full of grace and beauty. Hearing that the best years of her youth and womanhood were spent, before she yet knew grief, on this sunny hill slope, her feet being for ever among the daisies, poppies and anemones which grow everywhere about, we have made her the patroness of all our flowers. The Virgin is our rose of Sharon, our lily of the valley. The poetry, no less than the piety of Europe has inscribed to her the whole bloom and colouring of the fields and hedges. May is her month. Gardens are trimmed in her service, and all her chapels are decked and garlanded with

nosegays. The favourites of our meadows, some of them unknown to the flora of her own Galilee, bear names which are derived from her:—such as lady grass, lady smock, lady slipper, lady's key, marigold, and maiden hair. But the rose and the lily—the rose for its lustre, the lily for its sweetness—are, more than any others, considered as the Virgin's own. These flowers belong to the landscape of Middle Galilee no less than to the poetry of the Christian world.

Until her husband died, an event which is supposed to have happened when her son was a young man, she was once a year mounted on an ass and taken up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Every man rich enough to spare time and money on this journey to Jerusalem was bound to make it; thousands of their neighbour Galileans went up to the Temple every year; still more every second or third year; the bands setting out at one time, marching by the same roads, and keeping close together for their mutual help. These Passover pilgrims from Galilee formed a long caravan; the women and old men riding on asses and camels; the men and young lads trudging by their sides; the little folks running about from one group to another, playing with the dogs, gathering the wild fruit, and sometimes getting lost. Avoiding Samaria, as a country of heretics, contact with whom would have rendered a Separatist Jew unclean, they marched by the lower road, though it carried them east of the Jordan and through a somewhat perilous tract. Better, said they, the chance of being robbed

than the certainty of being defiled. So they wended through Gilead and Ammon; camping near a well at sunset; lighting their fires of sticks, and cooking their frugal meal; consisting of a dish of lentils and parched corn, fried in a little oil, with a melon, a cucumber, and a bunch of grapes. Recrossing the Jordan at Bethabara, a famous ford on the river, ten miles eastward of Jericho, they marched under the green date trees of the plain to the city and the mountain base, and then toiled up the rocky passes of the wilderness towards Zion, carrying fronds of palm and branches of myrtle in their hands, and singing their shemas and hosannas as they moved impetuously along the mountain roads.

Their journey ended, the company broke up near Bethany, a poor village on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, looking down the glen, over the desert ways by which they had come up. Of all those thousands on thousands, a few might have friends in Jerusalem who were able to receive them into their houses; only a few; the concourse of people being too vast for the whole body of pilgrims to find shelter within the walls. Every man lodged as it pleased him best. Some got into the poor little hamlets round about; some pitched their tents on the hill-sides and in the shady glens; but the thousands on thousands were content with the little green booths, called succoth, a wattle of twigs and leaves, such as Jacob had made for himself in Canaan, and such as the Sharon peasant still builds for his family at the Jerusalem gate.

Mizpeh, Olivet, Gibeon, Rephaim, sparkled with

these booths and tents, the slopes of the Cedron being alive with men and women, with sheep and goats, with camels and asses, while the great fountains of En-rogel and Siloam were thronged from morning to night with girls drawing water for man and beast.

The men from Galilee are said to have pitched their tents and built their booths on a part of Olivet, a little north of the road leading over its brow; one of the three mamelons into which the ridge is divided by nature; a circumstance which is supposed to have led to that mamelon being subsequently known by the name of Galilee hill, or hill of the men of Galilee.

CHAPTER XXII.

Roman Judea.

FROM year to year, as the Holy Family came up from Nazareth to Zion for the feasts of their faith, they would find the great city changing in aspect and in character; becoming less and less Jewish, more and more Greek; the plain house of stone giving way to the marble front, the portico, the colonnade, and the paved court. All through these years of the Lord's youth, the Temple was in progress; for the princes of Herod's line were all artists and builders, and it was the pride of Archelaus to carry on the structures which his father had commenced.

Then came another change. A man coming up to Purim, or Passover, found Roman soldiers braving about the lanes; strange hucksters vending goods in the markets and bazaars; a Gentile ruler keeping his court in Herod's palace and his armoury in David's tower.

Herod's will, executed by Roman officers, held for a short time; in Judea, for a very short time. On the day of his death in Jericho, two strong and energetic factions had raised their heads in Zion; the Noble party which the Maccabees had put down; and that Separatist party, now become the Popular party, which Herod the Great had crushed. These

two factions, comprising many of the ablest and richest men in Jerusalem, had made war against the Herodians, the Boëthusians, and the new settlement of Judea under Herod's will; the Noble party actively and with all weapons, hoping to cast down both Archelaus the Herodian Ethnarch, and Joazar the Boëthusian high priest, and to seize their powers; the Popular party negatively and with some reserve; for although they hated Archelaus as the son of a Samaritan queen, and would have helped to depose him at any risk of bringing on their country a civil war, they had no such animosity against Joazar the high priest, a man of popular manners, of blameless life, and of true sacerdotal descent.

The Nobles, waging war against the Herodians in the palace and the Boëthusians in the Temple, were led by Annas (Ananus), son of Seth, a man of high birth, of great wealth, of strong and persevering intellect; and in the course of a ten years' struggle they succeeded in crushing the Herodian party and sending Archelaus to Rome to answer for his crimes in Cæsar's court. It could not be said that the Nobles had won this battle by native virtue and native strength; the Separatists, the strongest party in Jerusalem, had helped them to ruin their half-Samaritan prince; but they had gained their triumph mainly by the aid of Rome, to which country they had sold their liberty and independence, in exchange for a party triumph and a personal lease of power.

In his short reign of ten years, Archelaus had

made many foes, and every party imagined they would gain by this weak man's fall. His brother, Antipas of Galilee, being an elder son of Herod, and great with Cæsar, fancied that he must succeed in his inheritance in Samaria and Judea, and that with the addition of these provinces to his state he would obtain the royal rank. The priests and nobles of Sebaste joined in accusing Archelaus, from a wish to get rid of their dependence on Jerusalem. Thus, on repairing to Rome, Archelaus found himself the victim of every party in Palestine; Antipas charging him with having governed his people for his own advantage, not for Cæsar's glory; the chief men of Sebaste and Jerusalem with having broken their sacred laws by taking a prohibited woman to be his wife.

Like all the princes of his line, Archelaus had been lax in love. Falling into a passion for Glaphyra, queen of Lybia, a young and beautiful widow, the daughter of a Cappadocian king, he had put away his own wedded Mariamne, to make Queen Glaphyra his only wife. In her youth, Glaphyra had been married to his brother Alexander, and had borne two sons, Tigranes and Alexander, to that prince. After her first husband's death, she had accepted Juba, king of Lybia. When that prince died, and she returned to Syria, Archelaus had seen her and begged her hand, which she had been only too prompt to give. Such a marriage was said to be condemned by the Oral Law; though the question of legality, like that between our own Henry and Catharine, might never have been raised but

for the secular interests which hung on the validity of a religious rite.

The Romans in Syria, like the French in Algiers, the English in Bengal, were only too ready in judging and deposing kings. The prince who had risked everything for his love, arrived in Italy to find that everything was lost, even love itself; for no sooner had the senate condemned him to the forfeiture of his province than Glaphyra expired of remorse and shame. Bereft of his rank, his money, and his queen, he was driven away to Vienne, in Gaul, where he spent in exile the remainder of his miserable days.

Cyrenius, then serving his second term of office in Antioch, received orders from Rome to annex Samaria and Judea to the empire; holding them with Roman troops and bringing them within the pale of Roman law. Sebaste and Jerusalem being far from Antioch, the mountains difficult and the people turbulent, he was allowed to treat these new districts of the empire as a sub-province, placing them under a Procurator of their own, with a provincial capital at Cæsarea on the coast. The new Procurator of Samaria and Judea was armed with the powers of a general and a judge.

Cyrenius came in person to Jerusalem; in part to levy the poll-tax; but mainly to see the party chiefs, and to settle a form of local government. Joazar, the high priest, and idol of the crowd, by whom he had been elected to his office, induced the people of Jerusalem to make a true return of their numbers and their properties; a service which the

instant revolt of Judas in Galilee enabled Cyrenius to appreciate. But the Nobles having already made their terms with Rome, and Cyrenius knowing that they were the only persons in Jerusalem who could be considered as permanently reconciled to a foreign yoke, felt no scruple in degrading the Boëthusian Joazar from the high priesthood, and in raising to that great office the ablest friend of Rome, the leader of the Noble party, Annas, son of Seth.

Coponius, the first Procurator of Samaria and Judea under this new settlement, placed a small garrison in Zion and a guard at the Temple gate; but he lived at Cæsarea on the sea, leaving the government of Jerusalem to Annas and the partners in his glory and his shame.

The common people, who saw their independence bartered away, who found the popular Boëthusians ousted by the aristocratic Sethians, had to bear as they could the fate of outwitted and vanquished men. With the Roman legions came the Roman fiscal system; harbour dues, port dues, town dues, customs, excise; in the streets a house-tax, in the markets a fruit-tax, everywhere a poll-tax. The Jews began to groan under the weight, and sicken under the names, of these Roman imposts. More than the rest, a head-tax galled them; the Separatists understanding it as a sign of their subjection, as indeed it was, and thinking with the Galileans that the payment of this denarius to Cæsar was a travesty of the shekel which they gave to God.

The faces of these poor Jews of the street and market-place grew sad. Not being priests and

nobles, having had no foe to punish, no fight to win, they found none of the consolations which they had expected from changing a native for a foreign rule. They only saw that their nationality was gone, that a stranger dwelt in Zion, that a distant prince disposed of their fortunes and their lives, while the man who ruled them with the sword could scarcely be considered as higher in rank than the slave of a slave. They were denied that grain of comfort which an Oriental finds in seeing and kissing the foot that grinds him into dust. For many years after Archelaus left Jerusalem, the poor Jews rarely saw the faces of their lords. Augustus dwelt in Rome, Cyrenius in Antioch, Coponius in Cæsarea. Jerusalem was garrisoned by a subaltern, governed by a priest.

Roman officers, whether Legates in Antioch or Procurators in Judea, held their posts, like our governors of Malta and Gibraltar, for three or four years only, and were then replaced; though it might chance that a man who was dear to an emperor or to an emperor's wife, might hold his seat for two or more terms. The following persons reigned at Antioch during the life of JESUS CHRIST on earth:—Cyrenius and Saturninus; Varus; Cyrenius a second time; Metellus; Piso; Saturninus a second time; Pomponius Flaccus. During the same period of time, the following procurators lived in Cæsarea:

Coponius	6 to 10 A. D.
Marcus Ambivius . . .	10 to 13
Annius Rufus	13 to 14
Valerius Gratus	14 to 25
Pontius Pilate	25 to 35

For fifteen years, that is to say from the reign of Coponius to that of Gratus, the settlement made by Cyrenius was undisturbed; Annas remaining high priest, and the aristocratic party ruling Jerusalem in the name of Rome. But Gratus, a new man, sent out by a new Cæsar, courting other parties in Judea, removed Annas from his high place, and set up Ishmael, son of Fabus, in his stead. This change caused a mighty uproar in the Temple courts, where the Nobles declared that no high priest had ever yet been deprived, by a Gentile judge—a declaration which was hardly true—and the Jewish congregations were told that a high priest could only be deposed from his office by God. Gratus soon found that he had made a false move; though he feared to go back even more than to go on. He might address his courtesies to Ishmael, and compel the people to pay him outward homage; but he could not make them love him and obey him. With or without an official title, Annas remained the true high priest; and in the end, Gratus had to yield before this popular force. Degrading Ishmael from his office, the Procurator restored peace to society in Zion by raising Eleazar, a son of Annas, to the vacant seat, and permitting Annas, under the name of Sagan, deputy, to discharge the spiritual duties and conduct the ceremonial rites.

The Noble party proved itself in fact, what it had always been in theory, the trustiest friend of Rome. Yet Gratus, having yielded the point from fear of disturbing the public peace, not from his own sense of right, could not help feeling that he had

been foiled by Annas, and when he believed himself strong enough to force his way, he put down Eleazar and set up Simon, son of Kamith, in his post. But the Kamithians proved as weak as the Fabusians, and his second act of opposition was made in vain. Annas had become too powerful in Jerusalem for any man to govern that city against his will. In less than a year, Simon fell as Ishmael had fallen; and Gratus made peace with the Nobles, by raising Joseph Caiaphas, the Sagan's son-in-law, to the vacant throne.

When Pilate came into Syria, bringing with him his wife Claudia and a Roman household, he changed in some degree the method of Roman rule; living less in Cæsarea, more in Zion; but he was too wise a man to meddle with the Jewish priests in affairs of faith and worship. He kept on good terms with the noble families, striving to win over to his government every one who could help him to preserve the public peace. Annas remained Sagan, Caiaphas High Priest, during the whole ten years of Pilate's reign.

But if the Noble Party were content with an arrangement that gave them all the ceremonial, and nearly all the civil, authority in the State, the Popular party, excluded from office, and heavily taxed, were much less satisfied with their Roman masters and their partisans the priests. Great numbers of poor herdsmen and artizans became infected with the Galilean views of Simon and James. The Galilean party—being warmer in zeal than the Separatists —was becoming more and more identified with the

Popular party, even in Zion. Their spirit was abroad, and the signs of their progress could be read by strangers. When Pilate rode up from Cæsarea to attend the feasts, the people hooted his banners, derided his eagles, and abused his guards. The Gentile glitter and pomp offended their sight; the effigies of Cæsar struck them as impious. They knew that Pilate was not a bad man, not a severe man: they saw that he was courteous, affable, just to every one; but they also felt that he was a stranger in their land, and master of their properties and their lives. This last was what they could not bear. On inquiry, the Procurator learned that a sect of fanatics had grown up in Galilee, which called no man lord, and that the opinions of this sect were becoming common among the Jews.

As year by year, the Roman yoke cut deeper into their flesh, the people, finding no comfort in their aristocratic rulers, prayed more and more loudly for that Christ who was to come. One after another, Messiahs were announced, though the end of most of these dreamers was a swift and cruel death. They appealed to the sword, and they perished by the sword. In time the legions got accustomed to these military Messiahs who flung brands into Greek buildings, made war on Doric sculptures, and rushed with a shout on the Roman lines.

But Pilate was still young in office when he heard the name of a Prophet of another type; of a man who carried no sword, yet drew after him a mighty crowd; who never called himself Messiah;

who never cursed the Gentiles; who never mentioned the subject of a holy war. The name of this Prophet was John. The scene of his preaching was the Wilderness and the Plain of the Dead Sea.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Wilderness.

THE Wilderness in which John the Baptist dwelt until his thirtieth year, and into which JESUS when his time arrived passed for his forty days of prayer and watching, begins at the gates of Hebron and Jerusalem, spreads beyond and below these cities to the south and west, and covers the mountain-slopes of Judah from the crest of the high table-land of Ramah and Olivet down to the fountain of Elisha and the shores of the Dead Sea. It is a tract of country about the size and shape of Sussex; not being a mere waste of scorching sands, herbless and waterless all the year, like the deserts of El Arish and Gizeh, but only a dry, unpeopled region, in which the wells are few, the trees low and stunted, the wadies full of stones instead of water, and the caves tenanted by leopards and wolves. It contains no town, not even a village. It has no road, no khan. The fox, the vulture, the hyena prowl about its solitudes. But even in the wilderness nature is not so stern as man. Here and there, in clefts and basins, and on the hill-sides, grade on grade, you observe a patch of corn, a clump of olives, a single palm; but the men who sow the grain, who shake down the fruit, are nowhere to be seen. They dare not stay upon the grounds which they rip with their

rude ploughs, or in which with careless husbandry they watch the olive trees grow; they hie away for protection to the hamlets and watch-towers on the hill-tops; to Maon, Tekoa, Bethlehem, and Bethany; for the Taámra Bedaween claim to be lords of the soil, and the spring grass and wild herbage tempt the Adouan from El Belka, the ancient Ammon, into these stony parts. No Syrian peasant dares to build his hut on land over which a Bedaween spreads his tent. In the Wilderness of Judah, the children of Esau are still what they were of old, the only abiding sheikhs and kings.

Suraya's raid into the Arab camp at Hebron, and the murder of those young men near Solomon's Pools, have roused the Bedaween tribes into fury, not only against the Turks, their eternal enemies, but against every stranger who may appear to be travelling through the country under Turkish escort. Hearing of this revengeful passion on their side, and having no desire to be shot under a mistake of flag, we ride over from our tents on Olivet to Abu Dis, an Arab village standing on the hill over against Bethany to the south; where we find the old chief, Mohammed Arikât, a man half-peasant, half-Bedaween, a thief, a rebel, some say an assassin, who in his old age, giving up open robbery, has settled down into a safer and more profitable business as agent between those Frank consuls who wish to protect their countrymen from peril, and the Bedaween sheikhs who regard all strangers as their natural prey. Arikât deals in escorts and passes. Paying head-money to the Adouan, and dividing his

profits with the Ehtaimât and the Abu n' Sair, two mongrel Arab tribes who skulk about Jericho and the Wady Kelt, he is able to offer you a protection from assault in the wilderness, which Suraya cannot always give. The bargain may be lawless; but in Syria where is the man who ever thinks of law? The peril of that road from Jerusalem to Jericho is an ancient text. Christ used it in the most beautiful of his parables; but no good Samaritan travels that way now, and the roadside inn is a desolate heap of stones. Bowing to facts, the Franks have made a compact with the robbers; so many piastres, so many lances; and you may learn as far away as Pera and Cairo how much black mail you must pay to Arikât and his partners, if on going down from Jerusalem to Jericho you should prefer to avoid the chance of falling among thieves.

Our errand is soon done. Arikât offers the service of his son Sheikh Mohammed, and of his nephew Sheikh Abdallah, two fiery fellows, who come out from the house to see us, shining in shawls and pistols, ready for either a journey or a fray; counterparts in look and dress, in age and gait, of the young men whom we saw dying and dead in the Hebron road. They hope that peace will be with us. We give them our hands and cigarettes; and after smoking a whiff of tobacco, and naming the Wady Alya as our place of rendezvous, we trot off towards Bethlehem, in the convent of which we propose to rest and sleep.

Early next day in the saddle, we first sweep round the fields in which the shepherds watched

their flocks by night; then ride up to the Mount of Paradise, that singular hill on which Herodion, the gay and voluptuous country house of Herod, rose among gardens and colonnades in the day when Christ was born in the neighbouring cave. Leaving the camel track behind, we strike the wilderness, due east, into the country owned by the Taámra tribe; our path being mostly down mountainous chasms, steep as the angle of a Gothic roof; now climbing a little way over stony hills, now running along dry river beds; but always, in the main, going quick and precipitous, down towards the valley of Bahr Lout, the Sea of Lot. The aspects of the country are changing every moment under our eyes. It is not merely that as we advance into the wilderness the land becomes more and more bleak, and parched and stony; that there are fewer gardens and shepherds; that the watchmen soon cease their patrol; that the tracks disappear. The very trees and shrubs are in a few hours not the same trees and shrubs as those in our rear. On the western slope of these hills, we found a homely and familiar vegetation, mixed with the flora of a more generous clime. In the valleys about Ain Karim, where John is said to have been born, we saw the dwarf oak, the bramble, the rock-rose, the arbutus, growing in the same soil with the fig, the olive, the carob, and the vine. On the high ridge which links Jerusalem to Hebron, plants known to our English woods and fields cease altogether. Beyond this ridge, oak, bramble, rock-rose, and arbutus will not grow. The line of separation is sharp and straight; for these plants bloom

up to the gates of Jerusalem, and there stop, like an army on a march. Not one of the plants just named, it is said, has been found on either Scopas or Olivet. The olive is seen for about an hour's ride further east; also the carob, and the lentisk; but these plants nearly cease on a line which may be drawn through Bethany and Beit Sâhûr. Even among herbs, rue, tamarisk, and planta genista are almost the only familiar names. The wilderness of Judea, so far as it possesses any flora, has a flora of its own. Salsolas, fagonias, zizyphus, alhagi, and artemisia find a parched and precarious life among the rocks and stones, and in the shady river beds.

A sudden picture on the hill-side in our front—a group of camels standing near a well, with a herd of goats and black cattle, a woman drawing water for them, three or four swarthy and naked children running and shouting among the flock, some asses tugging at the dry herbage — this desert picture causes me to draw the rein and gaze.

A well is the centre of nearly all that is sweetest in the poetry of Syrian life. It is the spot for which you long in the heat of noon; near which you spread your canvas at the close of day. In the dreary waste, it offers you a picture, often a drama. It is wedded to the ideas of woman and of love; for how can you forget that at the well of Haran, Rebekah gave drink to Eliezar, the servant of Abraham, and was chosen by him to be Isaac's wife; that at the same well of Haran, Jacob rolled away the stone for Rachel, and having watered her sheep, kissed her and loved her; that at the well of Midian,

Moses drove away the shepherds and assisted Zipora and her six sisters to draw water for the herd; that at the well of Nazareth, Mary filled her pitcher; that at the well of Sychar, JESUS spoke to the woman of Samaria, surprising her by begging a drink of water from one of an unfriendly sect!

As I sit gazing for an instant on the woman, the camels, and the flock, a wild cry, followed by an explosive crack, comes over a broad ravine on our left; but I no more dream of mischief in such a sound, than one feels on hearing a bird-piece in an English lane. Yakoub takes up the shout with a wiser ear: "Master, Master, come along; you stop, Taámra think you afraid; you ride fast, Taámra fire. Come along — slow." No enemy is in sight: no living thing, except the pastoral group in front— the flock, the camels, the children, and the young Arab woman at the well. But as we drop down the glen into the Wady Alya, we get sight of a new set of objects—the black covers of a Bedaween camp; an old man smoking at the door of his tent; several young men running and shouting; and in front of these, a tall fellow loading a carbine, which he easily lifts and fires. A figure on the left is rapidly descending the ravine, along the opposite edge of which we are moving towards the east. We have no reason either to fear the gun, or to return the fire; for the dip between the two slopes is a mile in width, and we have long ago learned to smile at the range of these Syrian toys.

Still, it is a sombre sort of joke to be fired into by Arabs, even at a long range; and as every step

is carrying us deeper into our neighbours' lair, we begin to think it would be well for our sheikhs to appear in sight. Why have these shots been fired? Are they meant to repel intrusion on their land, or only to warn us from using the water of their well? Ishmael and Saïd take the latter view, which is afterwards confirmed by our Bedaween sheikhs.

In Palestine, water is life, and the laws which regulate springs and wells are stern. A well is a work of labour; of labour and art combined; the limestone rock through which it is sunk being hard, and the shaft having sometimes to be pierced a hundred, nay, a hundred and fifty feet. None but the rich and mighty can afford the cost of boring thus deep into the earth. The most famous princes have been makers of wells and pools, of aqueducts and tanks; Abraham and Solomon among the Hebrews; Haroun and Saladin among the Arabs; the Mohammedan rajahs of India, the Moorish caliphs in Spain. To drill a hole into the rock is an act of piety and grace, as well as of power; and the Arab saying is, that the water-provider will be always blest, being daily remembered by the faithful in their hour of prayer. Some springs and wells have names in history, like towns and hills:—to wit, Beer-sheba, the well of oaths; Beer-elim, the well of heroes. Marah, the well of bitter waters, Esek, the well of strife, Sitnah, the well of accusation, are also famous names. Jacob's well near Sychar, Joseph's well near Safed, Moses' well near Suez, are known with more certainty than half our sacred sites.

By a Syrian custom, older than the oldest law,

a well belongs to the man who makes it, and after he is gone, it belongs for ever to his family and his tribe. No lapse of time is held to disturb this sacred right. The pastures of a country side may be free to all, but the waters of a well are the sacred property of one. To fill up a well, is an act of invasion, a challenge to the tribe who own it, a summons of the people to repel force by force. When the Philistines threw earth and stones into Abraham's wells, they meant to efface the witnesses to his having a property in the plain. When Isaac returned with his flocks to Gerar, the herdsmen of Sharon fought with his servants about the water rights, not about his consumption of herbs and grain. The lord of the water is lord of the land. A well is evidence of the owner's property in the soil; a landmark and a sign which cannot be gainsaid. No bond, no covenant, will in Palestine either last so long, or acquire so wide a fame. A stone may fall; a pillar may be stolen; but a shaft cut down into the solid rock, can hardly ever be destroyed. Seventeen hundred years after Jacob bought the field and dug the well in Samaria, the woman of Sychar, in her conversation with our Lord, appealed to it in her argument against the Jews; and only the other day, at a distance of eighteen hundred years from that memorable noon-tide talk, we pilgrims from the far West stood beside that well near Sychar, finding the curb stones gone, much of the shaft filled up, the outer walls broken and heaped, yet the hollow still damp, though the season is very dry, as if water would flow at a mere tap of the earth.

While guarding his right over the spring, a Syrian never refuses to share his last drop of water with his brother man. The well is his own, for his own use, and for that of his house; but the water is a gift of God, which every man and woman is free to share. But the Arab draws a line. He will give drink to the stranger, though he may deny it to the stranger's beast. When the supply runs short, as in the fall before rain, the camel and the horse, as we had found at Bab el Wady, may be sent from the troughs parched and maddened with thirst. Are the hills in the Wady Alya less dry than the plains of Sharon? Have the Taámra of the wilderness more water to give, than the fellahs of Latrûn have to sell?

No doubt the Taámra, fearing that their supplies may fail, would give us to understand by these shots that our troop of horses and mules must not take water from their well.

A Taámra claims not only an exclusive right over the few springs of this dry district, but pretends to have an exclusive knowledge of their whereabouts. These little reservoirs of moisture in the wilderness are his best defence against the invasion of regular troops, and the Bedaween knows how to hide them with elaborate art.

A young Frank was one day chatting with the seraskier about these desert tribes, and between two puffs of his chibouque delivered himself of an opinion that a regiment of English rifles and a company of London police would in two months purge all the wadies round Jerusalem from this black pestilence

of tents. The grave Oriental smiled, and for a moment the wide-awake and the turban dipped towards each other over the pipe of peace. In the lilac cloud which rose and curled before the Frank, a picture grew into shape:—scene, a wild hilly country in the Abruzzi; figures, a captain in green dress and dark feathers, leading on men, agile as panthers, armed to the teeth, and of a courage and endurance equal to their speed; action, the failing chase of a ragged bandit, ill-fed, ill-armed, who had his home in the forest. And looking into this familiar picture, the Saxon also smiled. "The problem," said the seraskier, laying down his pipe, "is how to follow the Bedaween in their flight. They ride upon good mares. They know the wells. A mounted troop must carry food, must count on finding water. The sun is fierce, and there is neither tree for shade nor town for rest. When the Bedaween find themselves pressed by an enemy, they stop the wells."

This power of stopping the well has always been the Syrian's best defence. When the Assyrians were preparing to invade Judah, how did Hezekiah meet them? He fought against the Assyrians as the Taámra would now fight against the Turks, by concealing the wells.

As the sun sinks at our back, the absence of Mohammed and Abdallah gives an opportunity for gloomy thoughts, of which we try to seize advantage. Night is coming on. Every stride may be taking us further into a snare. A fox starts in our path, a vulture broods on a crag and disdains to fly. The yelp of a jackal comes from a cave. On a high

tell we catch the figure of an Arab, erect, a carbine in his hand. From many trifling signs we note that the Taámra are about us, near, though unseen. By all poetic rules we ought to be cowed and silent, eager and alert; but there seems to be in the air, in the saddle, in the darkness, a spring of animal joy and daring which wakes the spirit like a rouse of wine, like a plunge into the sea. All our best efforts to feel hushed and tragic fail. We hum snatches of old tunes, and exchange repartees and tales; and when in the pause of an Arab song we catch the voices of our Arikât sheikhs in the wady far below us, we hail them with a laughing protest that they have only met us to spoil our fun.

It is nearly dark when we reach the towers of Mar Saba, a Greek convent built in the Cedron gorge, midway from Zion to Bahr Lout, in perhaps the very wildest spot on the earth's surface; appealing all the more to the imagination from the close proximity of a Christian chapel and a Bedaween camp.

CHAPTER XXIV.

John the Baptist.

THIS convent of Mar Saba—we should write it Saint Saba—was founded in the fifth century by a Syrian monk, of wondrous piety, singular taste, and some literary fame. This member of the Greek church composed the Typicus, a book of prayer which all the religious bodies in Judea adopted as their own. Having wandered on foot through the wildest gorges and deserts of Palestine in search of some spot more savage and sacred than all the rest, in which he might serve his Maker and lay his unworthy bones, he found what he had long sought in this ravine of the Wady Cedron. Nature had torn a cleft in the hill-side; bare rocks glowed white and hot in the sun; a little wild herbage grew in inaccessible nooks; the wilderness howled around him; and the Dead Sea simmered in the valley down below. The wolf, the lion, and the vulture, were his only neighbours. Lying in the Cedron glen, with Essene farms not distant, this cleft had already the charm and the reputation of a holy place. On the walls of the glen were a number of natural caves, like those which abound higher up in the hills near Bethlehem and the Mount of Paradise; and on climbing to one of these caves, and peering into its mouth, the saint beheld a lion crouching in his lair.

Bidding the savage beast depart, and being instantly obeyed, Saba felt that this lion's den was the proper place for him to choose; so, entering into possession of his estate, he made the lion's bed in the rock his home. Tapping the ground for water, a spring leapt forth at his feet; a spring of soft, sweet water, which flows, in proof of the miracle, to this very day, under the convent wall. Many anchorites are said to have gathered round the saint, that they might live in the odour of his sanctity; some had probably been there before his arrival; for we are told that when Saba died in yon den up the rocky stairs, he left a population in this desolate ravine and on the stony heights above it, equal to that of Jerusalem in the present day.

Some members of the Jewish schools—Essenes and Pharisees—were residents here in the reign of Herod the Great; the place having all the best qualities which the sterner Jews, of whatever rite, would desire in one of their holy retreats. It was not far from Jerusalem, the Temple of which could be seen from a neighbouring height. It was a lonely spot, having nothing in its soil and climate to attract either the Arab robber or the Roman lord. It was too dry to admit of fields and gardens, too hot to allow of a luxurious life. Yet there was some little moisture for man and beast, and a patch of mould on the rocks here and there enabled the anchorites to grow a mouthful of lentils and barley. Of one such recluse from the world we get a parting peep in a Jewish scribe. Banus, a Pharisee of the hardest rule, was a man who dwelt in a cave, who

wore a shirt of leaves, who ate no other food than herbs and roots of the desert, who soused his body in cold water day and night, to render himself clean and chaste. Banus drew to his cave the young men of rank and credit from Jerusalem. Josephus, the historian, is said to have lived with him in the desert for upwards of three years.

His cell may have been at this present Mar Saba; for a cave, and a spring, and a savage nook, were all here ready to his hand, within three hours' ride of the Bethlehem gate.

Some part of the same glen was probably the abode of John the Baptist, cousin of our Lord.

Of John's early life, before he went down to the Jordan ford in his camel's-hair shirt, and began to call in a loud voice on the Jews to repent of their sins and be baptized, we have only a glimpse. He is said in the Syrian legends to have been born at Ain Karim, a pretty and verdant spot in the hills, about five miles west of Jerusalem. Some say he was born at Jutta, a town or hamlet six or seven miles to the south of Hebron. Either way, his family was of saintly race; his father Zachariah being a priest of the Temple, his mother Elizabeth a daughter of the house of Aaron, and a kinswoman of the Virgin Mary. From his birth John had been vowed, like Samson and Samuel, to live as a Nazarite; that is to say, he had been pledged—just as a baby in Sicily and Andalusia may be pledged to the convent—to the observance of certain ancient and ascetic rites: to drink no wine, to eat no grapes, to abstain from fermented juices and from dainty

food, to pass no comb through his beard, to use no razor on his head, to dress in the coarsest garb, to indulge in no warm baths, to touch no dead body, not even that of either father or mother, wife or child. Thus, from his birth upwards, he was a holy man, set apart for the service of God.

At an early period of his life, he retired, like Banus, into the wilderness; which, whether his home were at Jutta or Ain Karim, lay near at hand; retiring from the sight of Jewish corruption, of Grecian luxury, and of Roman might. The Zion from which he fled was that city of Herod and Pilate which the new palaces, theatres, and baths, the soldiers, ensigns, eagles, and inscriptions, had transformed into something more like Athens and Antioch than the city in which David dwelt; a change unbearable to a pious Jew, who counted the subtleties of Greek art as so many abominations in the sight of God. Going out into the wild country, John put away the robe of his family and his order, to don the garb which had been worn by Elijah and the prophets; a sack of camels'-hair cloth, caught in at the waist by a leathern zone; the dress still worn by the children of Abu Dis. It was the habit of all the holy men of old, from the days of Elijah, the man of God, who stood before Ahab and his Sidonian queen, clothed in his shaggy locks, his shirt and girdle, and his mantle of sheep-skin. For the ancient prophets, like the more recent Essenes, setting their faces against crowded streets, and warning their countrymen how much their virtues had decayed in towns, exhorted them, even more by dress and picture than

by words, to appease the wrath of God by returning to the simplicities of Arab life. "To your tents, O Israel!" had been the cry of reformers in every age.

All the great teachers had practised what they taught. Moses retired from the people into Mount Sinai. Elijah lived apart from the world at Cherith. Some sort of retreat, accompanied by prayer and fasting, was the needful preparation for a holy and active life.

John followed in the wake of Elijah, JESUS in the wake of John.

To his cave in this desert wady, John drew multitudes of people from Jerusalem, Jericho, and the cities of Judah and Samaria. Many Jews were inclined to believe that the Shiloh whom they expected had come in John. His voice, his garb, his unshaven crown, his abstinence from wine and grapes, his fiery eloquence, calling on the people to repent and live, inflamed the imaginations of a suffering, superstitious, and expectant race. Some said he was Elijah come again. For the Jews, in exercising a poetical instinct which is the common spoil of conquered yet unbroken races, dreamed that Elijah, the most popular figure in their history, would come to life again; just as our ancient Britons expected Arthur to revive, and the modern Portuguese imagined Sebastian would awake.

Among the men who came to see and question John, hoping that he would prove to be their Messiah, were a knot of young friends from the lake country of Galilee; very strict Jews; enthusiasts for their creed and race. Two of these young men were

brothers, Andrew and Simon, sons of Jona of Capernaum. The third young man was John, son of Zebedee, also of Capernaum. Jona and Zebedee were boatmen and fishermen on the lake; men doing well in the world; having boats of their own, and hiring servants to cast out their nets. Old neighbours in Capernaum, and partners in their humble craft, they had seen their sons grow up as companions from the cradle, playing on the beach, handling the tackle, sitting in the same synagogue, until they were young men. The youths listened to the same Galilean preachers, talked with each other about the Messiah and the holy war, and went up to Passover in the same caravan. As the caravan in which they travelled came down to Bethabara, they would hear of John the Baptist; and being full of hope for a priest and king who could drive out the stranger and restore David's kingdom, they attached themselves to his side, receiving baptism at his hands, and expecting every day that he would declare himself the Son of God.

John told his eager audience that he was not Elias come again; that he was not the Messiah whom they sought; that he was but a man who had been chosen to announce God's coming, and prepare His way. The Deliverer, then, had not yet come; a needful warning to declare; since the two martial sects of the Herodians and the Galileans taught that the Lord had already lived and died. John told his people that the true Christ was still to come; that he would come soon; the kingdom of heaven being nigh at hand.

He said the kingdom of heaven, not that of the earth. These were strange tidings for a Jew to preach and for the Jews to hear. For neither in Samaria nor in Judea was any other kind of Saviour expected than a mighty prince, one who should prove himself greater than Herod, happier than Judas. If every heart was inflamed with the desire of change, that change was understood to be one of politics and state, beginning in a new Revolt of Modin, passing through fire and blood to empire, closing in a defeat of Cæsar, a destruction of the Greek cities, an expulsion of strangers from the land, and a personal reign of the Christ on earth. A Jew found it very hard to conceive of a mighty change that should be personal only—an inward, not a visible revolution. John proclaimed this startling fact, that the coming change was to be one effected in the spirit of man.

But more than this germ of a new gospel lay in the words he uttered. He called upon the people to repent and be baptized. Repent of what? Were they not the chosen race; had they not Abraham for their father? Why, too, should they go down into the Jordan and be baptized? Baptism was a rite performed upon an alien, not upon a Jew. The Greek, the Syrian, the Ethiopian, needed baptism; and such an ordinance for strangers who had joined their church they could understand. But a Jew was a man born into the true church. If they were sons of Moses, how could they require this outward sign?

The truth was, they were not sons of Moses;

they had forgotten his teaching, and replaced his law. The people had suffered a vital loss; of which they appeared to be unaware. They had separated themselves from their ancient faith. And this was not only the truth, but the key to nearly all other truths.

CHAPTER XXV.

Jewish Parties.

WHEN John began to preach, the Jews proper — excluding Samaritans and Galileans — were divided into the three great bodies of the Sadducees Pharisees, and Essenes. Most of the Sadducees were men of birth and rank; princes of the royal house, sons of high priests, heads of great houses, and their kin. Annas was a Sadducee. As a rule, all the old families, and most of the rich families, belonged to this aristocratic school.

There was something nobler in the Sadducees than their noble blood, though their virtues had already gone much to seed, and many among them seemed to have no higher aim in life than that of making the Law of Moses a means of advancement in Cæsar's court. Their master had taught them that virtue is its own reward, and that a good man will do what is right because it is right, without being spurred into his duty by hope and fear. But they drew from this doctrine a conclusion which is not in the premiss:—that the lure of enjoyment and the threat of pain were pious frauds, strong enough to impose on carpenters and goat-herds, but unworthy to enslave a scholar's mind. They showed a genius for Hellenic poetry and art, and found much to admire in Egypt and Rome. But, then, they were

too proud to render their acquirements useful to the land which they governed, and a people whom they despised.

Rich, accomplished, high in station, the Sadducees could defy public opinion, and laugh at the pretensions of more humble priests. A fellow in rags, dropping on his knee to a rabbi little richer than himself, was a favourite jest with them; as was also the notion of a tailor going up into the temple and paying half a shekel to a priest for the redemption of his soul. They said the fellow had no soul to save, and they knew the priest had no salvation to sell. In their daily lives they were easy and quiet; free from zeal; indifferent to applause; blind to all wrongs of their race; affable to strangers; inclined to pleasure, yet staid and decorous in their outward mien; careless of affairs so long as the streets were quiet, and nobody disputed their wealth and rank. Filling many great offices in the temple and the city, it was their duty, not less than their desire, to stand firmly by the two great powers of Cæsar and of God.

As to their articles of faith—the faith which they held in private—these noble Sadducees, rejecting the idea that a man should do right from so base a motive as greed or terror, put their trust in the Mosaic Law and in that law only; casting from them as so much priestly rubbish, all traditions and additions; all theories, commentaries, secret doctrines, mystical rubrics and interpretations; all rites and ceremonies, all extensions and developments, which they could not find in the language of the

sacred books. A doctrine not in the Pentateuch, they refused to admit on any one's word. Thus, they refused to believe in a resurrection and an after life. Nothing being said of a soul of man, of an existence after death, by Moses, they put that doctrine down as an invention; a bit of policy, clever in its way; being at one and the same time a consolation to the poor and a profit to the rich. But such an invention was, in their opinion, good only for the mob, not for scholars and princes. On the contrary side, they taught their sons that the soul dies with the body; that God has no concern with the affairs of men; that the human will is free; and that man is either good or evil by his own election.

All Jews believed in some sort that the Lord is with his people in the flesh; with them in the synagogue and the lonely place, at seed-time and harvest, in the chamber and on the march; blessing their obedience to his will by fruitful fields, abounding herds, health, triumph in war, beautiful captives, love, respect, the high seats of the table—more than all other gifts by length of days and homes full of sons and grandsons. But the Sadducees taught that God's promise to be with his people ends at the tomb. Their God was a God of the earth, of which it was their happiness and their virtue to possess a magnificent share. They laughed at all fables of a life beyond the grave; deriding the notion of angels and spirits; the sole heaven of which they had any knowledge being about them, in the palaces of Zion, in the gardens of Ophel, in the fountains of Siloam.

Hence, though a Sadducee might send a kid to the altar and a shekel to the priest, in deference to usage, as Socrates sacrificed a fowl to the gods in whom he put no trust, he offered no private prayers and supplications to Heaven. A garden of palms and olives, of grapes and figs, made the paradise of his heart. Content with his lot on earth, having no hope of heaven and no fear of hell, this learned and refined voluptuary was satisfied to eat and drink, to maintain the peace, and to despise the mob. Men of his easy faith may be found in every country and in every clime. To wear soft raiment next the skin, to eat from golden platters, to dwell in sumptuous mansions, to marry lovely wives, to be served by clouds of servants, to enjoy rank and precedence among men, are strong temptations to the soul. A man may delight in such things without sin; yet men who would rather be rich than free, happy than good, are not the heroes who will rouse their country from that torpor which commences in excess and ends in death. These Sadducees—in other words the party of nobles, the friends of Annas—supported Pilate, and lent no countenance to the policy of revolt.

The Pharisees, the second party in point of age, the first in strength of numbers, were a body of men professing to be set apart, selected from the mass. A Pharisee was one of the saints, one of those for whom the earth was made; a special object of Almighty care. These Separatists believed that it was only for a time, and only for their good that God was ruling them by a Roman sword. A little

while, and they would chase these legions into the sea. The Lord had promised them this deliverance from of old, written it down in their sacred books. They were always quoting this great Charter, always expecting a Deliverer to arrive.

In the sense which the Separatists put on the word patriot, they were patriots in the first degree; men to whom the Roman yoke was odious, and liberty sweeter than love and life.

To be ready was their motto. Either soon or late they knew that a Deliverer must come; every eye was straining for him, every heart yearning towards him; and on his coming they believed that the kingdom of the stranger would melt away, and Christ would reign over his saints for a thousand years. That God was angry with them for their sins, they could well conceive; evidence of the divine wrath being visible on every side of them; in the dominion of Cæsar, in the prosperity of Samaria, in the corruption of their high priests, in the erection of heathen temples, in the popularity of Ionic arts. But they told each other that God could not be angry with his own for ever. As He had remembered them in Egypt and in Babylon, so would He remember them once again. The night of their trial had been long, but surely the dawn was about to break. They must be ready. It was a patriot's duty to get his house in order, to scour his shield, to sharpen his lance. When the blast of the Deliverer sounded, it should not find his sword rusting in its scabbard, the cord of his bow broken, the edge of his battle-axe dull.

Dreaming of a revolt like that of Modin, of an onset like that of Adasa, the younger Pharisees passed their days in watching events, in exciting the people, in preparing for war. Unlike the luxurious Sadducees, they loved their country and religion better than their lives. In every street riot, in every temple uproar, they had a part. They yelled after Pilate's banner, they urged the Galileans to revolt. As no man could tell when the day of deliverance might arrive, they held it a sacred duty to be present in every fray, never shrinking from a brush with the soldiers and magistrates of Rome. Who should say? In one of these street riots, the trumpets of celestial warriors might be heard, and the Lord of hosts might descend in their front with his flaming sword.

In their religious creed, the Pharisees held a ground of their own; deriving their theory from the Oral Law, and putting as its foundation an idea in which the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai found themselves agreed. This idea was that God acts on man through temperament, so that his nature and his will are one; a doctrine which enabled them to teach that a man's deeds and misdeeds are his own, not God's, although God may foreknow when a child is born every act which he will commit between birth and death.

The Pharisees believed in an after life; in a resurrection of the body; in a scale of rewards for the good and punishments for the bad. Being told by the Sadducees that no such theories could be found

in the sacred books, they answered that they derived them from the Oral Law, which all the colleges and schools in Israel then taught as of equal authority with the Mosaic text.

Like the zealots of every creed and nation, some of the Pharisees made a public display of their opinions and of their hopes; walking the streets with affected gait; their heads inclined to the earth, their eyes half-closed, their thin lips moving as if in prayer. They took the high seats in their synagogues; they kept the great festivals with ostentatious zeal; they called on men to witness how strict they were; they placed on their brows those frontlets of parchment called phylacteries, on which they inscribed a number of Scripture texts; wearing them not only when they entered the synagogue, and during the hours of prayer, but while they stood in the public street, and when they sat down privately at meat. By this addition to their dress they meant to say that they were consecrated priests, that every act of their lives was holy, and that every moment of the day was given by them to God.

A Jew wore a red stripe on his mantle to distinguish him at sight from an Arab and a Greek; a difference of tribe being always denoted in Palestine by a difference in the garb. To excite more comment, a Pharisee wore this red stripe very broad, making of it what an Irish Celt makes of his green ribbon, a pious and a seditious badge. As he soared in devotion, or sank in despair, he increased the phylacteries on his brow and broadened the red band

on his cloak. For with him, worship was a public act; and he rent his clothes instead of rending his heart. His virtue was impatience, his religion hate. In every movement of his body, he wished it to be understood that he was throwing down a challenge to the magistrates of Rome.

Yet many good men, and not a few learned men, were Pharisees. Of this sect was Josephus the historian. Abtalion, Hillel, Shammai, Simeon, Jonathan ben Uziel were Pharisees. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, and Paul was educated in the school of the Pharisees.

The Essenes, youngest and meekest of the three great parties, were a protest of nature against the easy unbelief of certain priests and princes of the church. They ran into a wild extreme of faith. But like the Sadducees, they took no part in street politics, dreamt of no Messiah, and strongly opposed the theory of revolt.

In place of teaching that God has abandoned his children to the government of their own vices, the Essenes taught that Heaven is present in every act performed by every human creature, and that so closely that a man is neither good nor evil in himself, but only in so far as may be given to him by the grace and ordinance of God. In place of saying that the ends of life are to feast and marry, to govern and grow rich, to take in turn your pleasure and revenge, they said, by word and deed, that a righteous man should feed on coarse fare, that he would do well to keep single, that he ought to exer-

cise no authority over his fellows, and that when he had weaned his flesh from the world and become one of the elect he should sell his lands, and throw all his substance into the common fund.

The Essenes preached the immortality of the soul, the duty and blessedness of prayer, the merit of submission to God.

Putting away from them everything which most of the Jews prized so highly—courts, attendance, titles, palaces, gardens, hareems, even books and study, art and music—many of these pious men retired into the desert wadies, where they made it a part of their holy rite to till the soil, to rear bees and birds, to tend sheep and goats, to train vines, grow pulse and corn, wear camels' hair garments, and to live in their own persons a chaste and homely life. Their aim was to be good for the sake of goodness, and neither to seek nor to accept a recompense for virtue. They strove to be always holy in thought and pure in heart.

As to the outward facts of his life, an Essene was more than half a monk, but a monk of the most simple and least earthly type. He was bound to dwell apart from the world; to own neither money nor land, to enjoy no solace of wife and child, to labour for the bread which he ate, to dress in coarse cloth, to rise with the sun, and to fast from food on the Sabbath day.

In his views and in his habits there was an underlying lode of virtue. An Essene swore no oath.

He taught the sinfulness of war, even when war was waged in defence. He held the sacred gospel that under no confusion of right and wrong was a man to be made a slave.

Like the Sadducees, the Essenes were few in number, as a celibate order must always be; but they were of singular power for so small a sect. They nursed the sick and fed the poor. They set a high example of purity and chastity, virtues which, when voluntary, excite a strange respect in the minds of an Oriental crowd. In the midst of much moral corruption and a great spiritual blight, they helped to keep alive in Jewry some knowledge of the noblest truths.

The chief seats of this sect were pitched on the western shores of the Dead Sea, about the present Ras el Feshka, and along the slopes of the wilderness by Mar Saba and Ain Jidy. Some of them dwelt in the villages below Bethlehem. One of the gates of Jerusalem bore their name. Taking no part in affairs, the Essenes gave no trouble to the ruling powers, and their doctrine of obedience was a support to the actual prince. For if an Essene lent no active force to the government, he held that revolt was unlawful; not because the prince was doing right, but because revolt was contrary to the law of love. An Essene could not tolerate strife, and least of all strife in a holy cause. No pupil of his school was allowed to make sword, spear, or other weapon by which a man could be slain.

Herod the Great had given his favour to these harmless breeders of bees and birds, and Menachem, one of their chiefs, had exercised a merciful influence in the tyrant's court.

Menachem was a Jewish William Penn.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Dead Sea.

RESTING for the night at Mar Saba, in the wady Cedron, near the seats of these Essenes and Pharisees of old, we spring to our feet as the clocks chime twelve, souse our heads in a dish of water, like Banus and Menachem, swallow from the hands of Brother Demetrius a glass of raki, smoke a cheroot on the stone terrace, near the lion's cave, and leap into the saddle by two o'clock. No moon is out; but the stars are raining showers of glory into the wild abyss; touching the yellow rocks, the isolated towers, the Gothic chapel, the massive walls and flanks with a lustrous and a sombre spirit. Outside the iron gate, which no Bedaween and no woman is allowed to pass, and which no man may enter without an order from the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem; on the broad stone ramp, sit our Arab sheikhs, Mohammed and Abdallah, on their slim little mares; lithe fellows, dark-eyed, fierce, their hands grasping long Arab spears, their belts full of handsome old pistols, useless in a skirmish, but invaluable in a rack. Yakoub, our Maronite guide, and Saïd, the Nubian muleteer, are packing the baggage, and roping it to the mule. Ishmael is jingling his pouch of piastres and putting the charcoal fire to my second cheroot. Demetrius, the holy brother who had served

us with raki and shown us the skulls of six hundred saints, all monks of Mar Saba, stands by with his lantern, keeping an eye on the Bedaween sheikhs, and murmuring softly of backshish; while a band of his fellow monks are chanting lauds in a chapel hung round with lamps, and the chime of the convent bell goes booming in silvery thunder down the glen.

For five hours after quitting Mar Saba, we see neither house nor man, though we start many a wild fox and vulture, and pass by many a dead camel and ass. This is the district given by tradition to the Forty Days. In a dry well we find a fine leopard which falling into the hole, has died for lack of prey. It is just the kind of pit into which Reuben might have cast his brother Joseph; deep, but without water, and lying near the highway of travel through the wilderness.

Ere we drop down from the hills of Judah into the ghôr or plain, the sun has got up high in heaven; and as we gaze into the valley below, the blue and shining waters of the Bahr Lout appear to our blinking eyes more lovely than the tenderest of Italian lakes when seen from the Alpine tops. How long those tantalizing waters are in sight! Sinking from dip to dip, we come upon a wide and broken terrace of fine mould, mixed with chalk, which from the heights above had seemed to be the natural bed or level of the plain. But when we reach this terrace, it is found to be only the first and broadest of successive levels. We fall to a second, then to a third smooth table of alluvial soil. These stairs by which you

descend from the lowest range of hills to the ghôr, the true level of the Dead Sea, have a common character, produced no doubt by a common cause. They have all been under water. Where they have not been worn and furrowed, their smoothness is like that of a sandy beach. They are lapped by ancient shore lines, ribbed by ancient waves. Near the lake end of the river bed, the plain is dotted with a multitude of cones or tells, about fifty feet high, their crowns level with each other, and their sides smooth and round as the ebb and flow of water will wear a platform of marl and clay. These cones are so regular in shape as to resemble works of art; the tombs of sheikhs in times when men were giants, with natural pyramids for graves.

At some remote period of the earth's history, the great hollow of the Jordan has been full of water, and the terraces of chalk and sand, of gypsite, chert and tufa have been formed by the sudden and successive lowerings of a mighty inland sea.

By the Ain el Feshka, a saline spring in the ancient territories of the Essenes, we ride into a brake, or forest of canes, oleanders, agnus cacti, and prickly shrubs; ride into it in line, Mohammed in advance, Saïd with the baggage-mule in our midst, Abdallah in our rear; for this forest of spines and brambles, being the only bit of green cover on the plain, is a lurking-place for the Abu n' Sair, and for all the men of marauding and unfriendly tribes. A party of red men on a war-trail could not move with a more measured step than we use in passing through this brake. Mohammed feels the way. Every voice

is hushed, and every ear is open. A dozen times we halt among the thorns, while Mohammed rides to the front, or Ishmael swings himself into a neighbouring tree. A long, thin wail brings back no echo and no answer. With ears alert, with hands on our tabanjas (as these Bedaween call revolvers), we proceed; the two sheikhs holding many a parley between their teeth, in which the words are few, but the glances quick and bright. They know that we are treading on unsafe ground; not on account of the Ehtaimât and the Abu n' Sair, two bastard tribes of no great strength, who prowl among the ruins of Jericho, and about the pastures of Wady Kelt, but because the whole desert has been roused by Akeel Aga, and the disposition of the Adouan, the warlike tribe immediately in our front, but beyond the Jordan, is quite unknown. In common times they are tame enough. A fee they want, and a little bread and jebilé they expect; but a dish of tea pleases them, a charge of gunpowder wins their hearts. In times of strife, when their Salhaan neighbours are in motion, these Adouan are very uncertains friends to the Frank.

Emerging from the canes and tamarisks on to the sea shore, we catch sight of a man, the first whom we have seen since saying good-bye to Demetrius in the convent-gate; he is standing on the nearest cone or hillock, his face being towards us, one hand shading his eyes, the other hand grasping an Arab lance. Mohammed, calling to his cousin, pricks forward for the cone, while the rest of our party, led by Abdallah, jerk their way through the

burning pebbles towards a little islet, where, the Bedaween tells us, we may enjoy an easy and refreshing plunge into the brine. In ten minutes our young sheikh returns with but slender news, not having caught his man. He thinks the fellow was a scout for the Adouan, or some other predatory horde; but he guesses, from a hundred signs invisible to a Frank, that no large party of Bedaween has lately passed the ford. So far, the ghôr seems safe. Yet, as both the Beni Sakkr and the Adouan are known to be roving and restless, it is likely that a camp of Bedaween may exist near the Jordan, on the Moab bank, from which peril may leap on us at any moment of either day or night. So Mohammed, though he says nothing, looks as if he meant to keep watch and guard over the perilous plain.

Sending Ishmael on as a scout, placing Saïd near the shore with the mule, and posting Abdallah in our rear towards the brake, he slips into the water for an instant, throws on his sack and girdle, and rides off into position, while the Saxon is slowly pulling off his boots.

It is a strange and memorable scene. High mountains to the east and to the west; the heights of Abraham, the crests of Gilead, the Mountain of the Temptation; on our right hand the burnt cities of Lot; on our left hand the ruins of Gilgal and Jericho; in our front the long flat plain of sand and ashes, the green fringe of the sacred stream, and slanting across that river the ford over which Joshua passed, and on which JESUS was baptized by John. Not a cloud flecks the sky, not a breath stirs the

air, not a ripple moves the lake. No voice of bird, no hum of insect, breaks the oppressive hush. Pitiless streams the light upon these blinding sands. Here and there, along the shore, lie stems and boles of trees; old giants, torn by floods from the Jordan banks, dashed down into the Sea of Salt, tossed back in storms from its angry clutch, steeped thick with brine, and left to peel and whiten. As we strip to bathe, two vultures, gnawing at a dead camel, scream and soar into the air, wheel, cry, and sink upon one of these skeleton trunks; fixing their fiery eyes on a vision of white flesh, and never slackening that vampire gaze so long as we plash and plunge round the rocky isle.

Some people call the Dead Sea noisome. This must be done in obedience to a monkish tale, invented by Greeks who never wash, and repeated by Italians who cannot swim. Now, bathing on the beach at Malaga is good, in the Nile at Gizeh delicious, in the cave at Capri superb; but in these and all other waters, level with the sea, there is an easy limit to the words which express enjoyment of the bath. The pleasure is human, and may be borne, like the flavour of a fine wine, the taste of a rich fruit, the zest of a quick ride. But a plunge into the Bahr Lout is an essay by itself. Either from the glowing light, from the fevered blood, or from the cooling brine, your first dive into the Dead Sea is not a common bath, but an experiment in the unknown animal delights of life.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Jordan.

OUR first impressions of the Great Ford, the Bethabara of St. John, a pathway of stones in the Jordan bed, near the site of Gilgal, lying at the foot of the high mountain of the Temptation, are brightened by a bit of comedy, shaded by a little trouble, of our own; for in the shallow nook where John baptized his followers, we enjoy the frolic of a Bedaween attack; and near to the spot on which the multitude must have pitched their tents, athwart the burning ghôr, my parched and docile Sabeah falls to the earth, smitten to her death by sun stroke.

How much your daily history of travel becomes a record of petty cares! The homely earth is about you everywhere, when you ride and walk, when you eat and sleep. Fleas pester you in the Alhambra, smells offend you in the Grand Canal. A man on a journey is always mortal; he may sprain his ankle on the Righi, drop a ring into Como, catch cold in the Catacombs. Let him turn as he lists, the miseries of life go with him, like the slaves who were paid to cry out against pride in the emperor's car. Your pony bolts on the plains of Troy, your tooth aches in Carmel, your boat founders in the Nile. In travel there can be no set scenes, no stage heroics, no speeches aside. The action is direct, the scenery

is naked. An Arab steals your purse on the pyramid, a Negro stones you from the Haram wall; and is it not well that you should see and feel all actual facts, so as to shed in the quick light of truth all fancies and remembrances of places drawn from books? The heat and dust, the drought and flood, the watch and strife—the robber, the musquito, the hyena—are a part of the Holy Land, no less enduring than the orange grove, the vineyard and the well. Take the sunset and the city filth together. The homely thorns and briers upon your path only serve to etch the picture of rock and road, of tree and fountain, deeper into your mind.

Crossing the ghôr from Bahr Lout to El Meshra, the heat above, the dust beneath, grow hot enough to madden either man or beast. Your feet are like burning coals; your temples beat with pain; your tongue swells and reddens; blisters start upon your lips; your eyes blink and close under this intolerable light. A man who has either walked or ambled through an Alpine gorge on a summer day, two or three thousand feet above the sea, among forests of oak and pine, among cascades and cataracts, with rain in the herbage every second day, and snow in the hollows ten months in the twelve, remembering what it is to be walled up for hours in an airless valley, even under so tame a fury as a Bernese sun, may fancy what it is to tread the sulphurous plain of the Dead Sea before it has been cooled by the autumnal floods. The ghôr lies a thousand miles to the south of Berne; it has no thick forests of oak and pine; for ten months in the year it feels no

reviving rain; since the age of Lot it has never been cooled by a fall of snow; and instead of standing high above the sea, like the flat fields about Meyringen, about Martigny, it sinks down below it, no less than fifteen hundred feet beneath the tide in Jaffa roads. It has scarcely any verdure to cool the air; it enjoys no shadows from an early hour; and the face of the mountain chain which hangs above it is composed of a shining limestone rock.

Half-way between the lake and the ford, Sabeah, drooping into a walk from which neither voice nor whip can rouse her, swerves and sinks. She utters no cry; a slight shiver passes through her back; a sigh, not a start; and she reels and drops into the white dust, as into a bed. Mohammed, riding at my side, and accustomed to these desert scenes, implores me to mount the Nubian's horse, push on with our party to the river, and get into shade and water as soon as we can reach the bank; leaving Saïd behind to revive and bring on the mare. Glad enough to mount his horse, for the white ashes burn through the sides and soles of my English boots, as the hot sand of the Greeks is said to have crept through their folds of mail, I yet hesitate to leave my mare behind with this careless slave; the same thing, apparently, as leaving her to the vultures and hyenas. She seems to be faint with thirst; for the poor thing dipped her nose into the salt sea more than once, though merely to snatch it up with a shiver of disgust. Not having a drop of water in the jars, we moisten her lips with a bunch of grapes,

and thrust a thick slice of melon between her teeth. Her jaws seem locked. We stroke her mane, and pat her nose, and talk to her like a child; but she appears to be unable either to eat or move; though her eyes are wide open, and her chest heaves heavily in sobs.

Saïd now takes her in hand. First he kicks her in the belly, then cuffs her about the head, until my blood begins to boil in my veins against him, and the whip is raised in my hand to strike. I refrain from hitting the brutal slave, not because he would care for a blow, but on account of the humanities which Englishmen in their travels should always teach. Seeing my anger, the young sheikh springs to the ground, catches up a spine, and jobs it into the mare's nostril; whence the blood coming thick and fast, she begins to shake and kick. Once upon her legs, Saïd mounts her and rides her about three hundred yards, when she drops again. Again bled and raised, we push forward over the plain, until she falls a third time, and has to be a third time bled before we arrive at the Jordan bank.

There, to have done with her tale, poor beast, she was bathed and fired; but the stroke which cast her down into the sand was mortal, and early on the following day she died.

As we near the river, Mohammed and Abdallah ride up to Yakoub, and hold with him a long and earnest palaver in our behalf; the two sheikhs being of opinion that we ought not to pitch our tent near the ford, since signs which they can read, but cannot make me understand, inform their keener eyes that

enemies are near. They ask me therefore, to snatch a hasty meal, to enjoy a plunge in the river, to pick a few pebbles from the shore, and then mounting our horses, hurry away to the Wady Kelt, cross over to Riha, and pitch our camp, for the day and night, near Ain es Sultan, the Grand Spring, where, if either the Adouan or the Beni Sakkr should appear in numbers, we may have the additional protection of a Turkish fort. Into this arrangement I refuse to fall. The Jordan is a capital point with me; in London I had dreamt of the Ford by which Joshua and his army passed from Moab into Canaan; of the stream in which John immersed his disciples; of the river bank along which JESUS walked, and having come three thousand miles to see this place, to rest under these willows, to paddle in this flood, I resolutely demur to quitting it with a mere glimpse, let the Adouan and the Beni Sakkr do what they will. The scout, whom we saw near the brine wood, has not shown himself again. This may be a good sign or a bad sign. Mohammed says he may be following on our track, crawling through the furrows, hiding among the canes; in which case he will have seen that we are lamed of a mare, and weak to that extent for either flight or fight. If he were a friend, he would not have run away, and if he were alone he would have been sure to come in and beg, like all his tribe. Yet, English flesh and blood are not to be driven from a post by unseen foes. To all remonstrance and expostulation I reply by slinging my belt to a tree and doffing my clothes for a swim. Mohammed argues the case, while Yakoub is pitching

the tent and Saïd unpacking the mules; but finding that he can make no impression on Yakoub, he turns to Abdallah; and at last, by the time that Ishmael and myself are tumbling in the stream like dolphins, the sheikhs appear to have fallen in with a humour which they have tried in vain to overcome.

The Jordan flows through a rent or fissure in the plain, some twenty or thirty feet below the level of the broad ancient river bed; so that the fringe of reeds and canes, which makes the bank bright and cool, is invisible a few yards off. You are riding through a cloud of dust, hot ashes and blinding sulphur; a mountain wall in front and on your flanks; not a tree, not a shrub, not a blade of grass in sight; no more sign of vegetation round you than you would expect to see in a furnace; when suddenly, with a start, like a stage trick, your feet are among wild plants and your shoulders pressing against green boughs. Much of this flora is new and strange. The olive and the vine have now disappeared. The fig is still found; growing in this heat to an enormous size. The palm, though it is native to the soil, is nowhere to be seen; nor do many of the plants which flourish in the Wady Kelt and round the springs of Riha, grow in this part of the Jordan bed. The soil is sown with salt. Hence the vegetation consists of salsolas, suædas, sea-pinks, with a few tamarisks and acacias, the Populus Euphratica, and a long line of reeds and thorns; through the midst of which winds and eddies the sacred stream.

A sharp bend in its course has thrown up a bar

of flint and chalk: over which bar, the current being strong, the waters rush and foam. In fording the river, the Arabs have either to cling together in a line, or hold on to their horses' necks. At this point, say the Greeks, the twelve tribes passed over under Joshua, and the twelve chosen men took up the twelve stones from the river as a sign. Here also, say the same Greeks, John baptized the multitudes who came to him from Judea and from Galilee, among others the Son of Man; and thus it happens that the same ridge of limestone shingle was a witness of what may be called the first and the second birth of Israel; the dawn of its career as a separate and conquering people, and the change of its old spiritual life into a system of faith and morals for all mankind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Adouan and Salhaan Tribes.

SWIMMING across the stream to the Moab bank, wading back along the stony bar, picking up handfuls of white pebbles, ducking and darting through the currents, we spend an ecstatic hour; when Yakoub, having enjoyed his bath and laid the luncheon under a tree, calls out that the repast is served. It is hard to leave such a stream, even to eat and drink; but the coolness has brought on hunger; so turning once more into the whirls for a last lave, we observe Mohammed crawl stealthily from the water, throw a shawl round his temples, and, naked from neck to feet, bound up the bank.

What does he see? What does he mean? I glance at the tree on which my tabanja hangs; a weapon about which an Arab has a wild curiosity; but instead of running to that tree, Mohammed catches his mare, vaults into his seat, and disappears suddenly behind the shrubs. Abdallah, too, half-dressed from his bath, darts at his lance and his little mare, and poising the one, and flinging himself across the other, leaps up the bank. What evil is abroad? Before I can swim to the shore and question Yakoub, a sharp cry, like that which the sheikh had uttered in the brake near Ain el Feshka, in answered by a whoop from among the dense green

bushes on the Moab side. Ishmael now comes running towards the bar, sounding an alarm; and in less time than it takes to write the words, we are all out of the water, huddling on our clothes, snatching down tabanjas, buckling on belts. A dozen Bedaween have by this time shown themselves among the reeds of the further bank; three or four of them mounted, the rest on foot, and all of them armed with either firelocks or spears. They belong, says Yakoub, not to the Adouan, who dwell in the Wady Hesban and the Wady Seir, but to the Salhaan, a tribe of Bedaween obeying a ferocious chief named Goblan, who, as he receives no part of the plunder drawn from pilgrims by the Adouan and their allies, is not likely to respect the passports of Abu Dis. Our safety must depend upon ourselves. But where are the sheikhs? The young men cannot have fled, one of them without his clothes? "No, no," cries Ishmael; "they are near; they are in the shrub; they will soon come back." Meanwhile some of the Salhaan, crowding down to the ford, appear as if they meant to cross, when Yakoub opens a parley by asking them the news; adding that he is travelling with a great English sheikh, that the English fire-ships are at Jaffa, that he has a protection from the Adouan and an escort from Abu Dis. A hubbub of conversation can be heard over stream. They seem to know our strength as well as we know our weakness. Bedaween, Syrian, Saxon, and Arab (Saïd goes for nothing in a fray) must count five guns, some of them doubtless tabanjas. Now an Arab pays a Frank the very high compliment of

thinking it madness to attack him under a superiority of many to one. Standing on our guard, and noting every gesture and every tone we light our cigarettes, and lounge over the stream, as though the expectation of a fight were the last thing in our thoughts.

At length, one of the Salhaan demands from the great English sheikh, as the price of peace, a tabanja, a supply of powder, jebilé and bread. Mohammed, who now comes dashing down the bank, brandishing his long lance, takes up the talk, replying that the English sheikh will give them, in that way, neither tabanja, powder, jebilé nor bread; but that he invites the Salhaan sheikh to come over and eat salt in his tent. Two or three fellows rush down into the water, and one of these, bolder than the rest, leads in his mare; but Yakoub and Mohammed yell out that the great English sheikh is in a rage, and that no man shall step on the ford on pain of being shot. A new hubbub sets in; the only questions with the swarthy orators being the number of our barrels and the value of our traps.

Fear of the tabanja seems to rule the talk. In debating whether they will plunge into the stream, attack our tent, and take their chances of blows and plunder, some fear of offending the Adouan, some dread of calling down Hassan Bey, some shred of respect for the British consul, may be present to their minds; but the sight of revolvers is the main obstacle on which they dwell. A six-shooter is a weapon which as yet the Bedaween only knows by its own report; and like a steam ship, a rifled gun,

a telegraph wire, a railway engine, it is a product of science appalling to the savage mind. Most rovers of the Desert believe that when once a tabanja is set going, it never ceases to fire, and while firing never fails to kill, until its owner bids it stop. It is Shaitan's tool, if not Shaitan's spirit.

But then, on the other side, that fascination which a tabanja exercises over the Arab mind, makes him yearn for it with an ardour like that of love; and the passion to possess a weapon so terrible in his neighbours' eyes may tempt him into perils from which he would otherwise naturally shrink. Here he has the temptation of tabanjas; how many he does not know; two he may fairly count on; and in the present troubles of his government, the perpetrators of a single crime may hope to escape either punishment or pursuit. Are they aware that Hassan Bey is in Stamboul?

Such points as these, we know too well, are flowing rapidly through their talk; but seeing that we can only help them to a decision by indifference to their cries and threats, we lay our loaded pieces on the carpet, full in view of the marauders and sit down on the slope to eat our lunch.

The bread being cut, the fowls displayed, the tea boiled, the melons and pomegranates heaped about, one fellow, bolder than the rest, rushes into the water, as though he would compel his companions to decide for action, but on Mohammed raising his matchlock, and his kinsmen calling him back, he sullenly returns. Falling to the meal, we are beginning to think the affair will come to no-

thing, when Abdallah rides back slowly into camp, bringing in as a prisoner that very scout whom he had seen and chased near the brake. The wretch is more than half-dead with hunger and with fright. He is one of the Ehtaimât, a despised and mongrel race, too cowardly to fight, too lazy to work, who dwell among the ruins of Jericho, drawing wood and water for the Turks, exhibiting their lewd dances to the Franks, and acting as spies to the marauding tribes. Abdallah, having taken him under the tamarisks, making signs to the Salhaan across the river, understands his case; so slipping from his mare, and seizing a stout bramble, he leads the spy into my tent, points out to him the tabanjas, the fruit and fowls, the bread and tobacco, and after allowing him full time to feast his eyes on the white flesh, to fill his nostrils with the fumes of tea, catches him by the neck, thrusts him down the steep bank, forces him into the river, and with loud thwacks and curses, drives him upon the ford, and over it, in full view of his employers on the other side. Among Franks such an act would have raised every carbine against the insolent foe; but the sheikh seems to know his countrymen; for instead of these blows and curses causing the Salhaan to foam into passion, they seem to provide yon Bedaween with an admirable jest. The truth perhaps is, that the whole affair has been a game of brag, which the Bedaween begin to see that they have played and lost.

A voice from the other bank now calls a parley. Yakoub explains to me, aside, that the Ehtaimât

spy having told his tale, and the Salhaan chiefs, who so rarely indulge in the taste of flesh, being stirred by the thought of roast fowl and hot tea, of which latter luxury they are passionately fond, will now offer to come over on any terms. And so it proves. In a few minutes, Mohammed comes to the tent-door with a message from the Salhaan, saying that the three sheikhs will pay their English brother a morning visit, if they may bring over their mares and carbines. To this there is no objection.

The first sheikh, not Goblan, but a nephew, is a handsome young Arab, spare and lithe, about thirty years old, with black eyes, thin hair, and a very swarthy cheek. One man of his kin is fair; his cheek being ruddy, his eye almost blue. Among the Bedaween this young fellow is thought beautiful. Dressed in Frank costume he might be taken for a Saxon, perhaps for a Dane. Asking about his country and his people, we find that however fair, he is a true child of Esau, a dweller in the Moab mountains, a countryman of Ruth.

The men first break bread with us standing; when we have all eaten a piece, they sit down on their heels. After devouring the fragments of our meal, emptying everything except the flask of wine, they beg a little tobacco, and smoke, at our expense, the hospitable pipe.

When he has calmed his nerves by a few whiffs in silence, the sheikh observes that inasmuch as we have now broken bread, and become brothers of the Salhaan, there can be no longer the same objection on our side of the tent to giving him a tabanja.

We have two tabanjas, they have none. Our very servant (he means our master, Yakoub) has a tabanja. In Frangistan, he has heard it said, tabanjas may be bought in every bazaar. Can we not spare one for a brother? Deaf to all persuasion, we give them of our fruit, our bread, and our tobacco; none of our ammunition and our arms. The fair Arab then craves, as a final favour, that I will let him look at the tabanja; let him hold it in his hand. For love of his countrywomen Rachel and Ruth, I would gladly let him have his will; but we are sitting on the bank of a rapid stream, and I fear lest his virtue may be as frail as that of Rachel when she stole away the teraphim, from her father's house. Seeing me firm on this point, the young man begs me to fire it off; but I tell him, with a grave smile, that whenever it is fired it kills a man, and since they have eaten bread and become our brothers, it would be murder to shed their blood.

The shot goes home. After that, they begin to beg for trifles; nothing in our tent, from a lucifer match to a dose of quinine, being too foreign for their greed. There is a touch of humour, as it seems to me, in giving a piastre apiece to three swarthy fellows who have only just been debating among themselves whether they should attempt to rifle your saddle-bags and cut your throats.

So the Salhaan and the Saxon—the rover of the desert and the rover of the sea—sit down together under the canes, eating the Bethlehem grapes and sucking the Lebanon leaf, near the spot on which Joshua had encamped with the forty thousand

fighting men, before marching up to Gilgal, and close to the bar on which John had baptized the multitudes who flocked to him from Judea and Galilee.

In dress, in manner, and in aspect, John, the cousin of our Lord, must have had something in common with this young Arab sheikh. A man of the same race and lineage, he also wore a shirt of camels' hair, gathered in at the waist by a leathern belt; he had the swarthy hue which comes from a Syrian sun; he dwelt in the desert; he fed on coarse food, on locusts and herbs, and wild honey; and he drank no wine or other fermented juice.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Jesus at Bethabara.

AFTER Joseph's death, the date of which is unknown, it seems clear that JESUS continued to labour in his father's trade; going about the country with his axe, his chisel, his measuring line and rule; seeking such work as a Jew could find; and doing it with all his might. A carpenter's tasks were of many kinds: making benches for the synagogues, shaping poles and beams for tents, trimming masts, repairing boats, cutting lintels for doorways, mending roofs, making stools and shelves for domestic use. In labours like these JESUS was engaged until he had completed his thirtieth year.

It need not be thought that because he tramped about Galilee, mending benches in the synagogues and boats on the lake, that his occupations were considered mean. They were in fact holy. Every Jew, from the peasant in his hut to the high priest in his palace, learned some craft. If JESUS was a carpenter, St. Paul was a tent-maker, Rabbi Ishmael was a needle-maker, Rabbi Simon a weaver, Rabbi Jochanan a shoemaker. All labour of the hands was held in honour. One of the most despised of all employments among the Jews was that of tending sheep and goats—the office of a woman or of a slave; yet David had been taken from the hill-side

by Samuel, and after being a shepherd had been made a king. But a rise so great had been accepted as a wonder and a sign; like that of the prophet Amos, who startled the King of Israel by saying that he had risen from being a herdsman and a gatherer of the sycamore fruit. Compared with the occupation of David, that of JESUS was exalted; for the craft of carpenter was one of those noble grades from the proficients in which it was lawful to elect high priests. No handicraft could be followed by a slave; and none but a freeman could learn a trade. Some trades were, indeed, less eminent than others; to wit: the art of a tanner was condemned as noisome; the arts of a barber, a weaver, a fuller, a perfumer, were all considered mean; and no man following these crafts could be allowed, on any pretence, to serve in the sacred office. A tanner, like Jose of Sephoris, might become a rabbi; he could never be made High priest. Not so with the craft of carpenter: a craft which had a part of its functions in the synagogue and the temple; which was often adopted as a profession by men of noble birth; and which enjoyed the same sort of repute among the Jews that is given in England to the church, the army, and the bar.

JESUS followed this trade until his thirty-first year, when the time would arrive at which he could teach and preach the truth. A Levite rule had fixed this age at thirty years: "from thirty years old and upwards, even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service:" and this Mosaic rule had escaped the changes introduced before and

under the Maccabees. At thirty, John had begun to preach. So, on closing his thirtieth year, JESUS laid down his axe and chisel, his line and rule; and going by the caravan road to Bethabara, he saw the multitudes camped about the great Ford, so full to them of human story and of symbolic beauty; cleansing their flesh, repenting of their sins, and waiting for their Deliverer to appear. He passed the Ford; walking by the plains of Jericho into the limestone hills, into that waste country where the Essenes dwelt in caves; and there, among the wildest scenery on earth, rocks and chasms, dry wells and lairs of savage beasts, he spent forty days alone purging his flesh from dross, and chastening his spirit for that baptism which was to be a sign among his people that Israel had gone astray, and that every man must be born again into his holy Church.

Poor people from the vineyards and workshops flocked to John's camp on the Jordan; where they heard him preach repentance of sin, and many were baptized; some being Essenes, some Pharisees, still more Galileans; but no priests from the temple, no princes from Zion; for such men, had they heard of John at all, would have treated his eloquence as raving, his baptism as a jest.

Though the Sadducees had everything to risk—their state, their opulence, their sanctity—by a change of system, they felt little or no malice against reformers like John. If a preacher disturbed the public peace, so as to give the legions an excuse for coming into the Holy City, they could

act with rigour; but for zeal about the salvation of souls they had the toleration of a sincere contempt. The Pharisees, having more piety, had more of the persecuting spirit; and their doctors and scribes regarded this movement on the Jordan very much as a few years earlier they had regarded that of Judas in Galilee—a sign that a day was coming when stripes and frontlets would not be considered everything to an earnest man. Therefore, though the easy Sadducees, busy with their feasts and pomps, disdained to trouble themselves about John, he was not left to work upon these simple and earnest minds unwatched. The elders, being mostly Pharisees and expecting a Messiah, felt a keen anxiety about him, and when people began to speak of him in the gateways and the temple courts, urging that he must be either Elias or Christ, they sent down to Jericho some of their trusty but unknown priests, with orders to learn what they could of John. To this end they questioned him before all the people: "Art thou the Christ?"—"No." "Art thou Elias?"—"No." "Art thou the Prophet?"—"No." John's message was not for them, and no duty bound him to assist these spies in their evil quest. But they pressed him again, saying that they must have an answer for the Sanhedrin:

"Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?"

John replied to them in the words of Isaiah: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord!"

Then they began to question him as to why—if

he were not Christ, not Elias, not the Prophet—he baptized the people?

What could he tell them? Baptism was not a Jewish rite. A stranger coming into the synagogue had to be immersed in water, as a sign of his being cleansed from his former sin; but to baptize a Jew was to announce that he had not previously been his Father Abraham's son. More; if one man needed this purification of water, every man in Jewry needed it; the same thing as saying that the people had gone astray, and that Jews were no longer members of the Church of God.

John did not deny that his countrymen had gone astray, and must be received through a new baptism into the kingdom of heaven:

"I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not, he that cometh after me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

When He for whom the camp was waiting—though they knew him not—came down from the hill country and stepped into the stream, the swarthy preacher looking up into the sky, beheld the Holy Ghost descending in the likeness of a dove; and having been warned in the spirit that he should know the Messiah's person by this very sign of an alighting dove, he knew in his own heart, and told the men who were near about him, that his eyes had at last beheld the Son of God.

The Son of God! Then He whom all their prophets had foretold was once again said to have come. Imagine the joy which thrilled through that

expecting and tumultuous crowd on the Baptist's words being passed from lip to lip! A lordly Sadducee might smile at such predictions; finding his house bright and cheery, his friends in office, his party in high repute; and reading Isaiah and Micah in the same critical spirit in which he read Homer and Hesiod. But the craftsmen and shepherds believed in their prophets as they believed in hunger and thirst, in sunshine and rain. If anything was true on earth, it was true, in a Jew's idea, that a Messiah would come, and that when this Messiah was proclaimed, the kingdom of heaven would be nigh at hand. But under the light of his Oral Law, he read these Messianic prophecies all amiss. His hope was in a great prince; a man wiser than Judas of Gamala, braver than Herod the Great; for his fancies were of the world only, of its silver and gold, its palaces and thrones. In his eyes, the kingdom of heaven was a kingdom of the earth, having its chief seat in Zion, and places of honour in its court for all the saints. Most of the Jews had gone too far astray to imagine that the battles of Shiloh could be fought with the sword of the Spirit; that the captains of His host would be the despised of men; that the only crown which He would wear on earth would be a wreath of thorns. The Pharisees looked for a soldier, a judge, a prince; a more valiant Gideon, a more fortunate Samson, a more splendid David; and such a personage they wanted in their Son of God.

Crowding around John, they clamoured for their king; wishing to put him at their head; and to de-

clare his advent with a shout. How would he display his power? When could he begin his march? Would he drive out the faction of Annas? Would he sweep away the legions of Pilate? Not the least eager of those who put such questions to each other were the three young men from Galilee. Standing near to their Master, soon to be their Master no more, Andrew and John implored him to show them the man on whom he had seen the Dove come down; and as JESUS chanced to be then walking on the river bank, going home to his lodging, John pointed to him as he passed, saying:

"Behold the Lamb of God."

Andrew and John ran after JESUS, for if he were the Christ whom they had sought, he, and he only, was their Lord: the one desire of their hearts. Hearing these earnest feet behind him, JESUS turned round to the young men, saying:

"What seek ye?"

They asked him where he dwelt, and he bade them come home with him and see. So they walked home with him; probably to a booth of reeds and twigs, built under a palm-tree; a long way from the Ford it would appear, since it is noted as the tenth hour when they arrived; on which JESUS invited them to stay with him for the night. What words were spoken, what deeds were done, in that long April night, we have not been told; but we know that under the nodding palms and silent stars the two young fishermen from Galilee were that night chosen for the kingdom of God.

When it was day, Andrew ran for his brother Simon, crying: "We have found the Messiah!" on which Simon went back with him to the spot where JESUS dwelt. Seeing the third fisherman coming, the Master chose him also; giving him a new name, perhaps to distinguish him from his neighbour, Simon the Galilean:

"Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas."

Cephas was a Chaldaic word, meaning rock or stone: the same as Petros in Greek, Petrus in Latin, and Pierre in French. In English the name does not carry its symbolic sense; for the man's nature was like the basalt tumbled in heaps and lying in quarries about his native hill. And these three young men were the original members of the Christian church.

A declaration that the Son of God had come and was in their midst, unknown to them, would have placed the man of whom it was said in conflict with the laws as taught in the Great College and practised in Cæsar's court. A Messiah, true or false, was a man to be feared by those in place; by Annas as a rival priest, by Pilate as a pretender to the throne. Being proud and strong, such men might be slow to act, and when they acted would be sure to observe all legal forms. But as magistrates, they were bound to preserve order; the commons were hot and weak; and a tumult in the Baptist's camp might bring in from Jericho a sudden array of Roman troops, under the command of

captains less exalted and discreet. No man could yet guess that the new Messiah was to be of another nature than the old; most men hoped that he would be the same in kind, though higher in his degree of power. Pilate could not know that His words would be those of peace, His triumphs those of patience; and the Procurator of Judea, wise and fair as he seemed, had shown that he could be swift and savage in chastising disturbers of the public peace.

JESUS needed to be wary in his steps. The movement around him was in some sort a plebeian secession from Jerusalem; the Jewish Mons Sacer being the Ford, the Jewish Virginius being John. He could not put himself at the head of a seceding body, of a fragment of a sect. Nor could he allow himself to be proclaimed their king. They had to come to him; but before they could call him Lord, they must be changed in heart, they must be born into a new life. The work which he had to do on earth was a work of time; to be done with individual men and not with crowds; in the house, in the workshop, in the vineyard, in the threshing-floor, among the duties and toils of life, not in a tumultuous company and a separated camp.

In his own beautiful Galilee, under the half-pagan rule of Antipas Herod, among the mixed population of Syrians, Greeks, and Jews, he would be free to teach in the synagogue, free to live among the people, free to lay the foundations of his Church in the hearts of men.

So the day after he had called Peter to himself, he set out from the Ford, going up by the caravan road beyond Jordan into the lake country, leaving the warlike Separatists clamouring for their king.

CHAPTER XXX.

Cana in Galilee.

FAR away from the Pharisees' camp, from the Sagan's palace, from the Procurator's court, the Messiah's reign was beginning; his princes and captains being three poor fishermen from the lake of Galilee.

Still swarming into this fertile province, the Greek settlers and the Roman officers were raising cities in the strong places, launching ships on the canals and lakes, wedding towns and stations of imperial value by noble roads. One of their great roads ran through the province from west to east and north. Starting from Acre, a city called Accho in the days of Simeon, Ptolemais in those of Christ; touching at Sephoris, the old capital on the hill, a commanding post near the head of Esdraelon; dropping down the gorges of Hattin, where JESUS now preached his Sermon on the Mount; entering the gates of Tiberias on the lake; hugging the shore line from Tiberias to Magdala, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, where it crossed the Jordan by a bridge into the Greek city of Julias, this road sped along the base of Mount Hermon to Damascus: a work of noble art; paved like the Via Sacra; defended from Arab thieves by block houses, such as protect the present road from Jerusalem to the sea. Parts of

this road can still be traced; near Acre in the paving-stones; near Tell Hum in the cutting of a rock. Along this great avenue poured the streams of Roman and Egyptian life; the court of Herod, the legions and their eagles, the buffoons and athletes of the circus, the slaves and concubines of kings, actors and eunuchs, merchants and pilgrims, with the sumptuous traffic, the spices and jewels, the silks and drugs, from Egypt and Cathay. Much wealth passing to and fro, many thieves infested this Roman road: Arabs from the mountains beyond the lake; Moabites and Gileadites; fathers of the Anezi and Shammai tribes which still swarm over, every spring-tide, into Galilee, and devour the peasants' crops.

When JESUS and the three young men came up from Bethabara into the lake country, escaping the too early notice of the Pharisees, they passed by the splendid Greek cities, going home to the house at Capernaum in which Peter, with his wife, his wife's mother, and his children, dwelt. Under their humble roof he rested for the night only; adding three new members to his infant Church. There he saw Philip, a native of Bethsaida; a fellow-townsman of Peter and Andrew, and called him to his side, by the form of invitation: "Follow me." Philip is a Greek name, and the man who bore it may have been a Syrian of Greek descent. He was the fourth disciple called. This Philip had a friend, Nathanael bar Tolmai, a native of Cana, a small town perched in the hill country of Galilee, four or five miles from Nazareth on the Roman road; a man who had

been also watching for the Messiah's advent. Philip, therefore, ran and sought him, saying: "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, in JESUS the son of Joseph from Nazareth:" words which seem to imply that both Philip and Nathanael knew JESUS by name and sight; a fact which is otherwise likely in itself.

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" said Nathanael, with the local feeling of a neighbour; to which Philip answered in the brief words: "Come and see." Nathanael was the fifth disciple whom JESUS called. A little incident in this calling of Nathanael may have led JESUS into the first open exhibition of his power; for on the new disciple from Cana expressing his awe and wonder that the Lord should be able to describe him under the fig tree, where he could not have been seen in the flesh, JESUS told him he would soon see greater things, and a few hours later, in Nathanael's own town of Cana, the first and most symbolical of all his miracles was performed.

The next man to be called into the infant Church was James, the brother of John. The father of these young fishermen, James and John, was named Zebedee, a native of the lake country, perhaps of Bethsaida, like his neighbour and friend Jona, a man of substance, and the owner of a boat. Salome, his wife, the mother of James and John, a woman of quick feelings, easily gained to the new faith, eager to see her sons advanced to the high place which she believed would be their lot, was one of the very first female converts to the church.

But neither John nor Peter, neither Philip nor Nathanael, had any true foresight of what they would have to do. They were drawn to JESUS by his gracious aspect, by his earnest words, by his charm of character; not by any doctrine which they had heard him preach. As yet he had said little, except to their hearts, and that little they had been free to understand in their own way. Nor could he trust them with the mighty charge he bore, until their eyes had been opened, their natures purged, and their affections won. He had to treat these grown men as though they were little boys, training them to think and move, less by the light of knowledge than by the power of love. Hence he bade them follow him, live with him, talk to him so that they might learn to see as he saw, speak with his accent, labour in his spirit. Until a great change had been wrought in his soul, no Jew of that Separatist generation could have tolerated the idea that all men were brethren, and that the whole world might be saved. Yet the mission of JESUS was to announce this truth; to prove it by the evidence of his life and death; and to prepare the ministers who should carry it to the ends of the earth.

His mission was divine; but having to be accomplished by human means, a number of chosen men, Peter and John, Andrew and James, Philip and Nathanael, with the rest who were still to be found, had to be led gently on, first to hear, then to seize, afterwards to proclaim, the great fact that Jew and Greek were equally called into the kingdom of God. It was a work of time.

From Capernaum, JESUS and the young men walked up by the Roman road to Cana, a little village on a hill, nestling in the midst of gardens and groves, five miles from Nazareth, and so much nearer to Capernaum; there they found Mary and his brethren come to the wedding of one of Nathanael's neighbours. JESUS, being bidden to the feast, accepted the invitation, that the first public display of his divine power might be for ever associated in the minds of men with the joys of the bridegroom, the festivities of love, and the sanctities of home.

The piety and grace of marriage were at that time under a passing cloud; many of the Separatist doctors holding that the love of man for woman was a sign of corrupted nature, and that the state of matrimony was a state of sin. In the early ages, marriage had been given as a precious lot to all the seed of Adam: "A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." That gift had been used and abused; the best of men, from Abraham to Gideon, from Elkanah to David, having taken to themselves many wives, until the evil had reached its height in the splendid hareem of David's son. But from the days of Ezra and the Exile, when so many other things had been changed in Israel, the schools of Jewish thought had grown less easy and indulgent towards domestic love, as this love had been practised in the pastoral tent. No new law had been given; a man might still marry a hundred wives; and some men, rich and ostentatious, had

married their six or seven; but the habits of mind which led Gideon and David into polygamy, had fallen into disrepute; the number who inclined to keep hareems had become less and less; until public feeling had grown so hostile to the vice, that the nine wives of Herod the Great appeared to many persons less the signs of his glory than the evidence of his shame. So far the course of thought had been good and pure; but the reforming Pharisees had not been able to cool their ardour at the point of allowing a good man to marry a single wife. To some the principle at issue had appeared to be the same whether a man sought consolation of spirit in the love of many or of one. Love itself was the flaw. Love itself was the sin. Many good men had begun to think of marriage as a necessary evil, a compromise with the flesh and the devil, a beautiful and terrible snare to the soul. The more a Jew aspired to holiness of life, the more he affected to shun the society of women, lest his heart should be corrupted through his eyes and ears. A pretentious Pharisee would shut his eyes in a damsel's presence, and knock his head against a wall if he met a female in the street. One Hebrew school had reduced this feeling into words and rules; an Essene of the holier grade was not allowed to marry; and in the lower ranks of his order it was considered a proof of virtue to abstain. Thus there had arisen in Palestine a church which, in the name of purity and grace, had set aside God's holy ordinance of marriage as an evil thing, and introduced in its place a creed which in a hundred years would have

delivered up this lovely planet to the dominion of savage beasts.

Not then without pressing motive was the Lord's first public appearance made in connection with the marriage rite. A monastery may be peopled from the outer world; a sect may exist though its members are childless; but a nation cannot prosper without family ties; and a gospel which is to govern mankind must necessarily admit the sanctity of domestic love.

JESUS did more than grace the feast by his presence. That alone, would have been much; since many of these holy men who had not yet gone the length of describing marriage as an act of shame, spoke loudly against the mirth and frolic which accompanied the Oriental rite.

A Hebrew wedding had nothing to do with religious forms; called in no priest; implied no offerings to the temple. It was, above all, a social act; conducted with the laughter and the sports of an English May-day and a harvest home. A feast was given in either the bridegroom's house, or in his father's house. Neighbours and friends were bidden to come in; stone vessels with water stood near the door, so that every one might lave his hands before sitting down to eat; and as the sun went down, the bridegroom and his friends, attired in gay robes, anointed with oil and scented with myrrh, set out from the house, preceded by drums and pipes, attended by singers and torchmen, followed by a jocund multitude of boys and women, to fetch home the bride. Zoned in her mystic belt, garlanded with

flowers, clothed in a long white veil, which hid her person from head to foot so fully that the sharpest Jacob in Cana could not have told whether the lady were Rachel or Leah, the bride and her maidens awaited this procession; the act of taking her away from her father's house being the essence of the public ceremony. The bridegroom on coming to the house, took his beloved in his arms, set her under a canopy, and with a swell of drums and songs, marched her merrily through the streets. A Ruler of the Feast, perhaps riding on an ass, went first, the pipers behind him, then the bride and her maidens, afterwards the bridegroom and his friends, followed by the torchmen, the singers, the guests of the night, and, last of all, the rabble of the place. The merriment lasted long; seven days, fourteen days; during which time of feasting, the guests sang songs, made riddles, played games, and rejoiced with the bridegroom in his joy.

Men less pure and wise in heart than JESUS feared lest the lights and unguents, the glancing veils, the sounds of music, the night procession of youths and maidens; the merry meetings in which wine went round, and talk ran chiefly upon love, should lead to sin. Menachem would have fled from a marriage feast. Banus and John the Baptist would have denounced such scenes. The Essene and the Pharisee shrank from human nature; but the ways of Jesus were not their ways. Menachem was the leader of a sect; JESUS the legislator for a world. He entered into the house of mirth; he mingled in the feast; he shared in the bridegroom's joy; and

when the wine ran out, he ordered the six great lavers into which the guests had dipped their hands to be filled with fresh water, and carried up by the servants to the Ruler of the Feast, who, pouring it out, discovered that it was good wine. All Cana was the witness of this miracle; and Nathanael saw the first of those greater things which JESUS had promised at Capernaum that he should live to see.

This miracle was, in some sort, the consecration of love and wine; the richest blessing and the happiest gift of God to man. In this sudden separation of his system from that of John, JESUS gave the first grand lesson to his infant Church. John drank no wine; ate only wild food; lived in a cave; renounced the joys of marriage; set his soul against everything that could delight the eye and quicken the pulse. JESUS began his diviner labours by showing that nature is innocent, that mirth is lawful, that the use of all good things is good. And what he had done that day in Cana, he never ceased to repeat until the night before Calvary. He loved to feast and make glad; to anoint himself with oil; to put his feet into the bath. He said, I am the vine. He compared himself to a bridegroom. Many of his discourses were made at the table; his most holy sacrament was founded at a supper; he adopted bread and wine as the symbols of his own flesh and blood.

When the feast was ended at Cana, new scenes began to open on his Church. "The Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem:" —his first visit to the Holy City in his new character of Lord and Christ.

NOTE

ON THE TRUE POSITION OF CANA.

In the preceding chapter (vol. I., c. xxx.) I have assumed that Cana of Galilee, the scene of the first miracle, stood on the spot now known as Kefr Kenna; an assumption which, in the face of some modern conjectures, it may be thought desirable to have proved.

Two places in the hill country of Galilee, near to the old Greek city of Sephoris, bear names which may possibly be derived from Cana; Kefr Kenna, a village standing on a low ridge about five English miles from Nazareth on the north-east; and Khurbet Kânâ, now a ruin on a deserted tell, rising in the waste country beyond the plains of el Bûttauf, eleven English miles north of Nazareth, inclining a trifle towards the west.

The Church has never entertained a doubt as to which of these places was the true Cana. In very early times, the Greek community raised a magnificent shrine at Kefr Kenna in commemoration of the Marriage Feast. St. Willibald visited this shrine in 722 (*Early Travels in Palestine*, 16); Quaresmius described it about the year 1625 (*Historica Theologica et moralis Terræ Sanctæ Elucidatio*, II. 852); and the foundations of this edifice can still be traced.

No Christian remains have ever been found at Khurbet Kânâ.

In the dark ages, when books were few, and Palestine was closed against pilgrims, a curious error crept into

existence. A work compiled by Marino Sanudo, a Venetian, in the first half of the fourteenth century (*Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis super Terræ Sanctæ recuperatione*, etc.) was, perhaps, the original source of this error.

Marino Sanudo, one of the fanatics who dreamed of plunging Europe into a new crusade, compiled his Book of Secrets with the purpose of showing that the Christian princes might still recover possession of the Holy Land. Copies of it were sent to the Emperor, and to various kings and dukes, so that his treatise was widely spread, and enjoyed considerable vogue, though it was not actually printed until 1611. Sanudo, both in his coast map and in his text, put Cana to the north of Sephoris, instead of to the east of that city, where every preceding writer had placed it. The error may have been accidental; it may have been the mistake of an ignorant pilgrim or fugitive; but in the absence of all true knowledge of what more ancient and eminent authorities had said, Frank pilgrims to the Holy Land began to call a village on the spot indicated in Sanudo's map by the name of Cana. In this state of confusion the question remained until Quaresmius, a man of rank in the church, who knew Galilee personally, and who had read some of the later writings of travellers and geographers, settled the question in favour of Kefr Kenna by a full and fair statement of the facts. (*Historica*, II. 853.)

From the days of Quaresmius (1629) to those of Robinson (1841) the question was at rest, and the church traditions were undisturbed by critical doubt. But the American reformer of our current scriptural geography, in a book which had otherwise many good points, returned to the error of Sanudo and the confusion of the middle ages

(*Biblical Researches in Palestine*, III. 204), and writers who have taken his assertions and citations on trust, have been led by him into the exploded error of confounding the true Cana with the false. (Porter's *Hand-book of Palestine*, II. 378.)

The question may be once more set at rest by a careful survey of the evidence.

Let the position be noted on a map. Kefr Kenna stands on a lovely hill, about five English miles from Nazareth, in the direction of north-east, and near to the old Roman road from Sephoris to Tiberias; at the head of those valleys which lead down on one side into Esdraelon and on the other into the Lake Country; so that every one coming up from Capernaum to Nazareth, every one going down from Sephoris to Tiberias, would have to pass through its vineyards and gardens on their way. The ruins of Khurbet Kânâ stand on an isolated tell in a wild and difficult district, six English miles due north of Sephoris, eleven English miles from Nazareth, and separated by swamps and quagmires from the line of the great Roman road. (Thomson's *The Land and the Book*, II. 26.)

The only writers, contemporaries with the First Miracle, who mention Cana, are Josephus and St. John; whose references to it are precise enough to suggest, if not to fix, the site.

Josephus speaks of Cana as "a village of Galilee called Cana": *Κώμῃ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ἣ προσαγορεύεται Κανά* (*Vita*, XVI). St. John by way of distinguishing it from Cana in Judea, calls it simply *Κανά τῆς Γαλιλαίας*: Cana of Galilee (John II, 1). Josephus says he was staying in Cana, or rather he was posted there, during a critical time in the Civil troubles; and the whole course of his narrative

implies that Cana was a place standing between Sephoris and Tiberias, severing and controlling the two capitals of his district, over both of which it was needful for him to keep watch and guard. Observing the machinations of John of Gischala among the Tiberitans, he could afford to wait in his aërie until that turbulent patriot had committed himself beyond the law, when Josephus tells us that he quitted Cana in the night, secretly, with two hundred men, marched down the wady into the low country, and arrived near the gates of Tiberias by dawn of day, his own messenger being the first to inform the citizens of his approach. It is in the last degree unlikely that a soldier would have been lying at Khurbet Kânâ; a place, if it then existed at all, which would have been out of his way, and cut off by Sephoris from communication with Tiberias by the only practicable military road. It is all but impossible that Josephus could have made his sudden and secret night march from Cana to Tiberias, if his point of departure had been a place six miles beyond Sephoris, through the streets of which city he would have been obliged to pass, and the gates of which he would have found closed after sun-down. (*Vita*, XVII.)

In like manner the whole narrative of St. John implies that Cana was a hamlet lying on the road between Nazareth and the Lake Country. Jesus, coming up from Capernaum to Nazareth, meets his mother on the way at Cana, where he is invited to the marriage feast. The nobleman, coming up from Capernaum to Nazareth, finds Jesus, returning from Jerusalem, at Cana. After the second miracle, Jesus and his mother simply go down to Capernaum (*μετὰ τοῦτο κατέβη εἰς Καπερναοὺμ*) an expression which implies that Cana stood in the hill country of

Galilee immediately above the ascent from the Lake. (John II. 1, 12; IV. 46, 47; XXI. 2.)

These indications of Josephus and St. John, indications slight but significant, go to prove that the true site of Cana is that in which the church traditions have always placed it.

Robinson ventured to dispute the truth of these traditions on two grounds: (1) that he had heard a native call Khurbet Kânâ, Kânâ el Jelîl (Cana of Galilee), which he imagined to be a proper name; (2) that all Christian writers before the days of Quaresmius, with the single and doubtful exception of Bonifacius, had placed Cana in the situation occupied by the ruins of Khurbet Kânâ. (*Biblical Researches*, III. 208.)

That the first piece of evidence, even if it were true, ought to have no weight in the discussion; and that the second assertion is the result of Robinson's misquotations it will be only too easy to satisfy the reader who will take maps and books in hand.

First, as regards the pretended native name. Unhappily for his purpose, Robinson could not speak a word of Arabic, and he had consequently no means of asking the natives a single question, or of sifting the evidence for any story that he might be told. Now every man who has travelled in Syria knows with what ready invention the natives will answer all leading questions, and with what serpentine guile they will try to make things pleasant, if they can do so at the cost of words. If a traveller can only make up his mind to believe everything he hears, he may collect by means of a shrug, a smile, an emphasis, the premises of any conclusion which he has previously

drawn. It is an old moral of travel in Palestine, that travellers find everything they bring with them.

The truth seems to be clear enough that the term Cana of Galilee was not a proper name; only a method of distinguishing the Cana near Nazareth from the Cana of Judea, as we should say Richmond in Yorkshire when fearing a possible confusion with Richmond in Surrey. Josephus says he was staying in a village of Galilee called Cana (*Διέτριβον δὲ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον ἐν κώμῃ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ᾗ πρόσαγορεύεται Κανά, Vita*, XVI.), not in a village called Cana of Galilee, and St. John's expression, *Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας*, is translated in the Authorized Version indifferently Cana of Galilee and Cana in Galilee (John II. 12; XXI. 2). The real name was Cana; and the two writers used the additions "of Galilee," and "a village of Galilee," so as to prevent any possibility of a Greek reader confusing it with that Cana of Judea which a grand disaster of the Greeks under Antiochus had made famous in history. (Josephus, *Bel.* I., IV. 7.)

In speaking to travellers, the natives may call Kefr Kenna Cana of Galilee, and some of them may also call Khurbet Kânâ Cana of Galilee, by way of distinguishing them from any other Canas elsewhere, and because they hear travellers ask for them by this name. But among themselves, they use the proper local names, speaking only of Kefr Kenna and Khurbet Kânâ. Thomson, an American by birth, an Arab by knowledge and experience of the country, could not glean from strict and wide examination of the natives any particle of evidence in favour of Robinson's assertion, that the Arab people call Khurbet Kânâ by the name of Cana of Galilee. Thomson says: "I pestered everybody I could find on the right and

the left, farmers, shepherds, Bedaween, and travellers, with inquiries about the place where the water was turned to wine. With one consent they pointed to Kefr Kenna. Some of them knew of a ruin called Kânâ on the other side of the Bûttauf, but only one had ever heard the word Jelîl as part of the name; and from the hesitation with which this one admitted it, I was left in doubt whether he did not merely acquiesce in it at my suggestion." (*The Land and the Book*, 425.)

The assumption, then, that Kânâ el Jelîl is the proper native name for Khurbet Kânâ falls to the ground, with all the arguments built by Robinson upon it.

As regards the testimony of early writers, the reply to Robinson is not less certain. The first Frank writer who in mentioning Cana indicates its locality, is St. Willibald, an English pilgrim who went to the Holy Land in 722. A large church was then standing in the place. Willibald gives neither bearings nor distances; but he tells us that he went from Nazareth to Cana on his way to Mount Tabor; an obvious route if Cana were in his time situated at the present Kefr Kenna; an impossible one if it stood at Khurbet Kânâ (*Wright's Early Travels in Palestine*, 16). A man going from Nazareth to visit Khurbet Kânâ and Mount Tabor would have to make separate journeys; for the best way to get from Khurbet Kânâ to Tabor would be to come back to Nazareth. The next witness, Sæwulf, also an Englishman, who went to Palestine in 1102, is more precise. Indeed, his description, faithfully quoted, leaves no room for doubt that Kefr Kenna is the Cana then recognised by the Greek and Latin churches. Sæwulf says: "A Nazareth distat Chana Galileæ, ubi Dominus aquam in vinum convertit in nuptiis, quasi sex miliariis

ad aquilonem, in monte sita.") Relatio de Peregrinatione Sæwulfi, in the *Recueil de Voyages et de Mémoires*, publié par la Société de Géographie, tom. IV., p. 851. Paris: 1839. 4to.) The passage is translated by Mr. Wright: "Six miles to the north-east of Nazareth, on a hill, is Cana of Galilee, where our Lord converted water into wine." Sæwulf's mile is, of course, the Roman mile of 1614 yards; and his assertion that Cana is six Roman miles from Nazareth is probably as near a guess at truth as any traveller, judging distance by the time consumed in riding, has ever yet made. The addition that it lies north-east completes the identification with Kefr Kenna. If all the church traditions had been lost, and not a stone were left on the spot to prove its antiquity, a geographer, with Sæwulf's words before him, would have laid down Cana on a map in the exact position which it has always occupied.

How then came Robinson to revive this singular mistake? Simply by an error of translation. Sæwulf says that Cana stands six miles north-east of Nazareth—*sex miliariis ad aquilonem;* Robinson translated the word *north.* In middle age Latin, this word "aquilo" was used to designate the north-east wind. (See Wright's *Vocabularies*, p. 36.) Even if the word had meant "north," as in classical Latin, it would not have helped Sanudo's theory; for the position six Roman miles north of Nazareth was covered by the great Greek city of Sephoris. The false Kânâ is eleven miles north of Nazareth. (*Biblical Researches*, III. 207.)

It is scarcely necessary to add, that so long as Galilee remained open to pilgrims, no doubt ever sprang up as to the true site of Cana. A little later than Sæwulf, Phocas